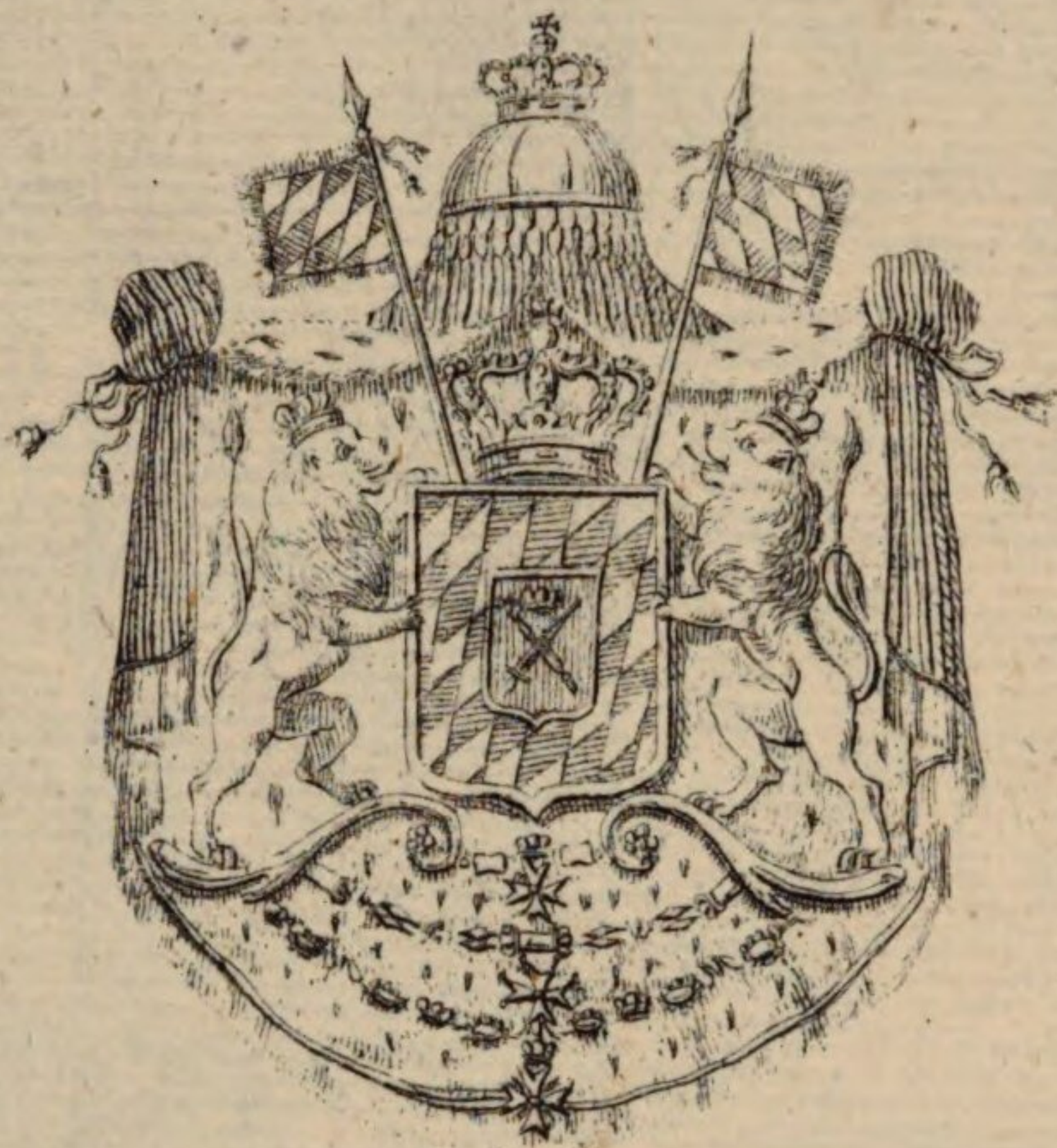




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HISTORY
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Including an Investigation of the
HISTORY OF BAPTISM IN ENGLAND

FROM THE
EARLIEST PERIOD TO WHICH IT CAN BE TRACED
TO THE CLOSE OF THE SEVENTEENTH CENTURY.

To which are Prefixed,
TESTIMONIES OF ANCIENT WRITERS

IN FAVOUR OF
ADULT BAPTISM:

EXTRACTED FROM DR. GILL'S PIECE, ENTITLED,
"THE DIVINE RIGHT OF INFANT-BAPTISM EXAMINED AND DISPROVED."

BY JOSEPH IVIMEY.

London:

PRINTED FOR THE AUTHOR;

And sold by

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1811.

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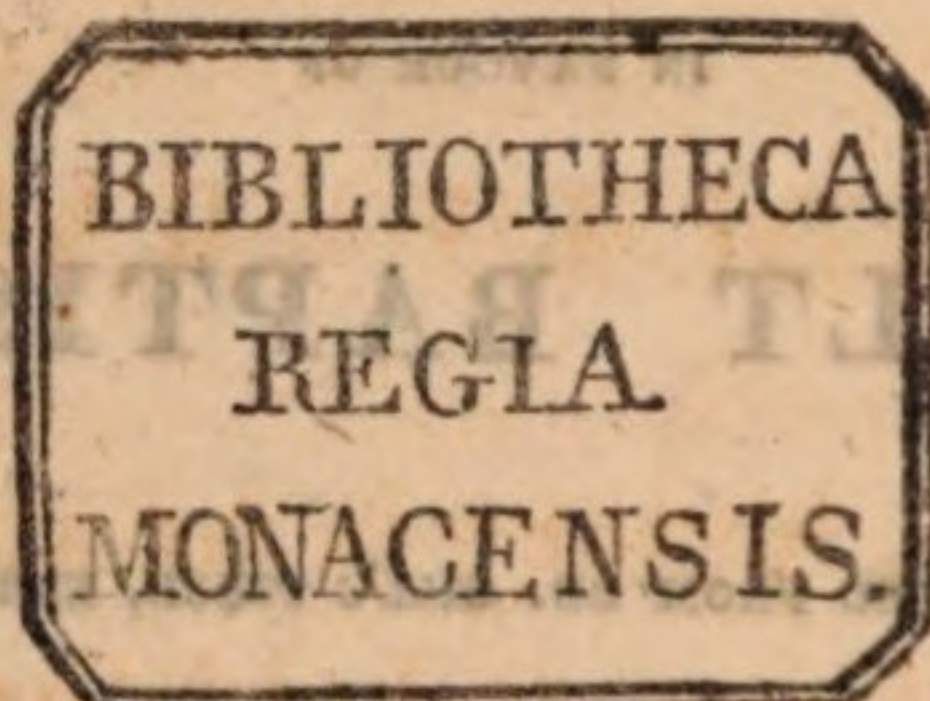
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PREFACE.

THE Reformation was an important era in the history of this country. The fetters with which Popery had long shackled the minds of men were then knocked off, and the use of the bible led many to embrace those sentiments in doctrine and discipline, which accorded with the simplicity of Christ.

The subsequent history is an attempt to prove that the English Baptists held the genuine principles of the Reformation, and pursued them to their legitimate consequences. Believing that the bible alone contains the religion of Protestants, they rejected every thing in the worship of God which was not found in the sacred oracles.

Without intending to offend those who differ from the English Baptists in their distinguishing tenet, we think it right to premise, that this work will also attempt to prove, that Infant-bap-

tism in England owes its origin to Popery ; --- that the ancient British Christians before the coming of Austin knew nothing of the practice ; --- and that many at least of the Wickliffites and Lollards, the first English reformers, rejected it as a popish innovation, and maintained that “ all traditions not found in the scriptures were superfluous and wicked.”

It was these sentiments which led to the formation of societies dissenting from the Popish establishment before the Reformation, and dissenting from the Protestant establishment afterwards.

The English Baptists were the first persons who understood the important doctrine of Christian liberty, and who zealously opposed all persecution for the sake of conscience.

A large proportion of their churches were averse to all interference with political matters during the convulsive period of the civil wars. It is, however, to be lamented that some of them during that period confounded the power of the magistrate with the government of that kingdom which is not of this world.

The sufferings which have been endured by the English Baptists on account of their religious principles, give them a claim to the gratitude of every true lover of liberty and of his country. To them may be applied with peculiar propriety, what the historian Hume says of the Puritans in

general: "By whom the precious spark of liberty was kindled and preserved."

It is not too much to say that their history has never been fairly given. Influenced by prejudice, many of our historians have either kept them out of sight, or have exhibited them to public ridicule and contempt.

For many of his materials the writer is indebted to Crosby's History of the English Baptists, in 4 vols. octavo, published about seventy years ago. This work is now become very scarce; and it is so badly written, that an abridgement and arrangement of its contents have long been thought desirable.

He has also endeavoured to collect those works published by themselves, from which may most certainly be drawn a fair statement of their principles. Though he has succeeded in his researches beyond his expectations, he is desirous of procuring additional particulars concerning them, that the biographical part of the work, which he intends to publish in another volume, may be rendered as perfect as possible. He has prefixed the extract from Dr. Gill's work, entitled, "The Divine Right of Infant-baptism examined and disproved," in order to show that there is no evidence that Infant-baptism is of apostolical origin; and also, that the testimonies of ancient writers are in favour of adult baptism.

The author takes this opportunity of acknowledging his obligations to many of his brethren for their readiness to assist him. He desires more particularly to return thanks for the use of the Manuscript of the late Rev. Joshua Thomas of Leominster; to the Rev. Mr. Frost of Dunmow in Essex, for the use of a valuable Manuscript of his progenitor, Mr. William Kiffin; and for the liberty of consulting the Manuscripts and other works deposited in Dr. Williams's library, Red-Cross Street, London.

As to the use which he has made of his materials, it must be left to his readers to decide. He is, however, prepared to say, that he has faithfully related the facts which have come to his knowledge, without a wish to promote any object but the cause of God and truth.

If his labours should be useful to the denomination to which he considers it an honour to belong, by exciting them to a zealous imitation of the virtues of their ancestors, he will receive an abundant compensation; to which will be added the high gratification of having done all in his power, that the names of some of those great men may be had in everlasting remembrance.

THE AUTHOR.

London, Jan. 1. 1811.

10
HISTORY OF BAPTISM
COMPARATIVE
This church afterwards greatly increased; three thou-
sand persons, who were brought to the heart under Peter's
ministry, repented of their sins, and joyfully received the
DIVINE RIGHT OF INFANT BAPTISM

THE
EXAMINED AND DISPROVED.

**OF THE ANTIQUITY OF INFANT BAPTISM; WHEN FIRST DEBATED;
AND CONCERNING THE WALDENSES.**

THE minister, in the dialogue, in order to stagger his neighbour about the principle of adult baptism he had espoused, suggests to him, that infant baptism did universally obtain in the church, even from the apostles' times; that undoubted evidence may be had from the ancient fathers, that it constantly obtained in the truly primitive church; and that it cannot be pretended that this practice was called in question, or made matter of debate in the church, till the madmen of Munster set themselves against it; and affirms, that the ancient Waldenses being in the constant practice of adult baptism, is a mere imagination, a chimerical one, and to be rejected as a groundless figment, p. 7, 9.

I. This writer intimates, that the practice of infant baptism universally and constantly obtained in the truly primitive church. The truly primitive church, is the church in the times of Christ and his apostles. The first christian church was that at Jerusalem, which consisted of such as were made the disciples of Christ, and baptized; first made disciples by Christ, and then baptized by his apostles; for Jesus himself baptized none, only they baptized by his or-

Apostolical churches.

der.* This church afterwards greatly increased; three thousand persons, who were pricked to the heart under Peter's ministry, repented of their sins, and joyfully received the good news of pardon and salvation by Christ, were baptized, and added to it; these were adult persons; nor do we read of any one infant being baptized while this truly primitive church subsisted. The next christian church was that at Samaria; for that there was a church there is evident from Acts ix. 31. This seems to have been founded by the ministry of Philip; the original members of it were men and women baptized by Philip, upon a profession of their faith in the things preached by him, concerning the kingdom of God, and the name of Jesus Christ.† Nor is there the least intimation given that infant baptism at all obtained in this church. Another truly primitive christian church, was the church at Philippi; the foundation of which was laid in the two families of Lydia and the gaoler, and which furnish out no proof of infant baptism obtaining here; for Lydia's household are called brethren, whom the apostles visited and comforted; and the gaoler's household were such as were capable of hearing the word, and who believed in Christ, and rejoiced in God as well as he.‡ So that it does not appear that infant baptism obtained in this church. The next christian church we read of, and which was a truly primitive one, is the church at Corinth, and consisted of persons who, hearing the apostle Paul preach the gospel, believed in Christ, whom he preached, and were baptized;§ but there is no mention made of any infant being baptized, either now or hereafter, in this truly primitive church state. These are all the truly primitive churches, of whose baptism

* John iv. 1, 2. Acts i. 15.

† Acts viii. 12.

‡ Acts xvi. 14, 15, 32, 33, 34, 40.

§ Acts xviii. 8.

No evidence of Infant baptism.

we have any account in the Acts of the apostles, excepting Cornelius, and his family and friends, who very probably founded a church at Cæsarea; and the twelve disciples at Ephesus, who very likely joined to the church there, and who are both instances of adult baptism.* Let it be made appear, if it can, that any one infant was ever baptized in any of the above truly primitive churches, or in any other during the apostolic age, either at Antioch or Thessalonica, at Rome or at Colosse, or any other primitive church of those times. But though this cannot be made out from the writings of the new testament, we are told,

II. That undoubted evidence may be had from the ancient fathers, that infant baptism constantly obtained in the truly primitive church. Let us a little inquire into this matter.

1. The christian writers of the first century, besides the evangelists and apostles, are Barnabas, Hermas, Clemens Romanus, Ignatius and Polycarp. As to the two first of these, Barnabas and Hermas, the learned Mr. Stennet† has cited some passages out of them; and after him Mr. David Rees;‡ for which reason, I forbear transcribing them;(A) which are manifest proofs of adult baptism, and that as performed by immersion; they represent the persons baptized, the one§ as hoping in the cross of Christ, the other|| as having heard the word, and being willing to be baptized in the name of the Lord; and both as going down into the water, and coming up out of it. Clemens Romanus wrote an epistle to the Corinthians, still extant; but there is not a syllable in it about infant baptism. Ignatius wrote epistles

* Acts x. 48. and xix. 1—7.

† Answer to Russen, p. 142, 143.

‡ Answer to Walker, p. 157, &c.

§ Barnabæ Epist. c. 9. p. 235, 236. Ed. Voss.

|| Hermæ Pastor, l. 1. viz. 3. s. 7. and l. 3. s. 16.

Testimony of Irenæus.

to several churches, as well as to particular persons; but makes no mention of the practice of infant baptism in any of them: what he says of baptism, favours adult baptism; since he speaks of it as attended with faith, love, and patience: "Let your baptism (says he*) remain as armour; "faith as an helmet, love as a spear, and patience as whole "armour." Polycarp wrote an epistle to the Philippians, which is yet in being; but there is not one word in it about infant baptism. So that it is so far from being true, that there is undoubted evidence from the ancient fathers, that this practice universally and constantly obtained in the truly primitive church, that there is no evidence at all that it did obtain, in any respect, in the first century, or apostolic age; and which is the only period in which the truly primitive church of Christ can be said to subsist. There is indeed a work called, *The Constitutions of the Apostles*, and sometimes the *Constitutions of Clemens*, because he is said to be the compiler of them; and another book of Ecclesiastical Hierarchy, ascribed to Dionysius the Areopagite, out of which passages have been cited in favour of infant baptism; but these are manifestly of later date than they pretend to, and were never written by the persons whose names they bear, and are condemned as spurious by learned men, and are given up as such by Dr. Wall, in his *History of Infant Baptism*.†

2. The christian writers of the second century, which are extant, are Justin Martyr, Athenagoras, Theophilus at Antioch, Tatian, Minutius Felix, Irenæus, and Clemens of Alexandria; and of all these writers, there is not one that says any thing of infant baptism; there is but one pretended to, and that is Irenæus; and but a single passage out of him;

* Ignatii Epist. ad Polycarp, p. 14. Ed Voss.

† Part I. c. 23.

No evidence of Infant baptism.

and that depends upon a single word, the signification of which is doubtful at best; and besides the passage is only a translation of Irenæus, and not expressed in his own original words; and the chapter from whence it is taken, is by some learned men judged to be spurious; since it advances a notion inconsistent with that ancient writer, and notoriously contrary to the books of the evangelists, making Christ to live to be fifty years old, yea, to live to a senior age: the passage produced in favour of infant baptism, is this: speaking of Christ, he says,* “Sanctifying every age, by that likeness it had to him; for he came to save all by himself; all, I say, *qui per eum renascuntur in Deum*, who by him are born again unto God; infants, and little ones, and children, and young men, and old men; therefore he went through every age, and became an infant to infants, sanctifying infants; and to little ones a little one, sanctifying those of that age; and likewise became an example of piety, righteousness, and subjection.” Now, the question is about the word *renascuntur*, whether it is to be rendered *born again*, which is the literal sense of the word; or *baptized*; the true sense of Irenæus seems to be this, that Christ came to save all that are regenerated by his grace and Spirit; and none but they, according to his own words;† and that by assuming human nature, and passing through the several stages of life, he has sanctified it, and set an example to men of every age. And this now is all the evidence, the undoubted evidence of infant baptism, from the fathers of the first two centuries. It would be easy to produce passages out of the above writers, in favour of believer’s baptism; I shall only cite one out of the first of them; the account that Justin Martyr gave to the Emperor Antoninus Pius of the christians of his day,

* Irenæus adv. Hæres. l. 2. c. 39. p. 191.

† John iii. 3, 5.

Apology of Justin Martyr.

though it has been cited by Mr. Stennet and Mr. Rees, I shall choose to transcribe it; because, as Dr. Wall says,* it is the most ancient account of the way of baptizing next the scripture. “And now, says Justin,† we will declare after what manner, when we were renewed by Christ, we devoted ourselves unto God; lest, omitting this, we should seem to act a bad part in this declaration. As many as are persuaded, and believe the things taught and said by us, to be true, and promise to live according to them, are instructed to pray, and to ask fasting, the forgiveness of their past sins of God, we praying and fasting together with them. After that, they are brought by us, where water is, and they are regenerated in the same way of regeneration, as we have been regenerated; for they are then washed in water, in the name of the Father and Lord God of all, and of our Saviour Jesus Christ, and of the holy Spirit.” There is a work, which bears the name of Justin, called *Answers to the Orthodox, concerning some necessary questions*; to which we are sometimes referred for a proof of infant baptism; but the book is spurious, and none of Justin’s, as many learned men have observed, and as Dr. Wall allows; and is thought not to have been written before the fifth century. So stands the evidence for infant baptism from the ancient fathers of the first two centuries.

3. As to the third century, it will be allowed that it was spoken of in it; though as soon as it was mentioned it was opposed; and the very first man that mentions it speaks against it, namely, TERTULLIAN. The truth of the matter is, that infant baptism was moved for in the third century;

* History of Infant Baptism, Part I. c. 2.

† Ον τροπον δὲ ἀνεδηξαμεν εαυτες, &c. Justin. Apolog. II. p. 93, 94. Ed. Paris.

Tertullian opposes Infant baptism.

got footing and establishment in the fourth and fifth; and so prevailed until the time of the reformation. Though, throughout these several centuries there were testimonies bore to adult baptism; and at several times, certain persons rose up, and opposed infant baptism; which brings me,

III. To consider what our author affirms, that it cannot be pretended that this practice was called in question, or made matter of debate in the church, until the madmen of Munster set themselves against it, p. 7. Let us examine this matter, and,

1. It should be observed, that the disturbances in Germany, which our Pædobaptist writers so often refer to in this controversy about baptism, and so frequently reproach us with, were first begun in the wars of the Boors, by such as were Pædobaptists, and them only; first by the Papists, some few years before the reformation: and after that, both by Lutherans and Papists, on account of civil liberties; among whom, in process of time, some few of the people called Anabaptists mingled themselves; a people that scarce in any thing agree with us, neither in their civil nor religious principles, nor even in baptism itself; for if we can depend on those that wrote the history of them, and against them, they were for repeating adult baptism, not performed among them; yea, that which was administered among themselves, when they removed their communion to another society; nay, even in the same community, when an excommunicated person was received again;* besides, if what is reported of them is true, as it may be, their baptism was performed by sprinkling, which we cannot allow to be true baptism; it is said, that when a community of them was satisfied with the person's faith and conversation, who proposed himself for

* Cloppenburg. Gangræna, p. 366. Spanhem, Diatribe Hist. Sect. 27

Disturbances in Germany.

baptism, the pastor took water into his hand, and sprinkled it on the head of him that was to be baptized, using these words, *I baptize thee in the name of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.** And even the disturbances in Munster, a famous city in Westphalia, were first begun by Bernard Rotman, a Pædobaptist minister of the Lutheran persuasion, assisted by other ministers of the reformation, in opposition to the papists in the year 1532; and it was not till the year 1533, that John Matthias of Harlem, and John Bocoltus of Leyden came to this place;† who, with Knipperdolling and others, are, I suppose, the madmen of Munster, this writer means; and he may call them madmen, if he pleases; I shall not contend with him about it; they were mad notions which they held, and mad actions they performed; and both disavowed by the people, who are now called Anabaptists; though it is not reasonable to suppose, that these were the only men concerned in that affair, or that the number of their followers should increase to such a degree in so small a time, as to make such a revolution in so large a city. However, certain it is that it was not their principle about baptism that led them into such extravagant notions and actions. But what I take notice of all this for, is chiefly to observe the date of the confusions and distractions in which these madmen were concerned, which were from the year 1533 to 1536. (B) And our next inquiry therefore is, whether there was any debate about the practice of infant baptism before this time.

2. It will appear, that it was frequently debated, before these men set themselves against it, or acted the mad part

* Budneus apud Meshov. Hist. Anabapt. l. 4. p. 96.

† Sleiden. Comment. l. 10. p. 267, 269. Spanhem, Diatribe Histor. de Origine Anabaptist. Sect. 18.

Disputes at Zurich.

they did. In the years 1532 and 1528, there were public disputations at Berne in Switzerland, between the ministers of the church there and some Anabaptist teachers;* in the years 1529, 1527, and 1525, Oecolampadius had various disputes with people of this name at Basil in the same country;† in the year 1525, there was a dispute at Zurich in the same country about Pædobaptism, between Zwinglius, one of the first reformers, and Dr. Balthasar Hubmeierus,‡ who afterwards was burnt, and his wife drowned at Vienna, in the year 1528; of whom Meshovius,§ though a Papist, gives this character:—that he was from his childhood brought up in learning; and for his singular erudition was honoured with a degree in divinity; was a very eloquent man, and read in the scriptures, and fathers of the church. Hoornbeck|| calls him a famous and eloquent preacher, and says he was the first of the reformed preachers at Waldshut. There were several disputations with others in the same year at this place; upon which an edict was made by the senate at Zurich, forbidding rebaptization, under the penalty of being fined a silver mark, and of being imprisoned, and even drowned, according to the nature of the offence. And in the year 1526, or 1527, according to Hoornbeck, Felix Mans, or Mentz, was drowned at Zurich; this man, Meshovius says,¶ whom he calls Felix Mantscher, was of a noble family; and both he and Conrad Grebel, whom he calls Cunrad Grebbe, who are said to give the first rise to Anabaptism at Zurich, were very learned men, and well skilled in the Latin, Greek, and Hebrew languages.

* Spanhem. *ibid.* Sect. 13. Meshov. *Anabapt. Histor.* p. 3. p. 16, 18.

† Spanhem. Sect. 13. Meshovius, *ibid.* c. 2.

‡ Spanhem. Sect. 11. Meshov. l. 2. c. 4.

§ *Ibid.* c. 15.

|| *Summa Controvers.* l. 5. p. 356.

¶ Meshov. l. 2. c. 1.

Reformers oppose Infant baptism.

And the same writer affirms, that Anabaptism was set on foot at Wittenberg, in the year 1522, by Nicholas Pelargus, or Stork, who had companions with him of very great learning, as Carolostadius, Philip Melancthon, and others; this, he says, was done, whilst Luther was lurking as an exile in the castle of Wartpurg in Thuringia; and that when he returned from thence to Wittenberg, he banished Carolostadius, Pelargus, More Didymus, and others,* and only received Melancthon again. This carries the opposition to Pædobaptism, within five years of the Reformation, begun by Luther; and certain it is, there were many and great debates about infant baptism at the first of the Reformation, years before the affair of Munster; and evident it is, that some of the first reformers were inclined to have attempted a reformation in this ordinance, though they, for reasons best known to themselves, dropped it; and even Zwinglius himself, who was a bitter persecutor of the people called Anabaptists afterwards, was once of the same mind himself, and against Pædobaptism. But,

3. It will appear, that this was a matter of debate, and was opposed before the time of the reformation. There was a set of people in Bohemia, near a hundred years before that, who appear to be of the same persuasion with the people called Anabaptists; for in a letter, written by Costelecius out of Bohemia to Erasmus, dated Oct. 10, 1519,† among other things said of them, which agree with the said people, this is one; “such as come over to their sect, must every one be baptized anew in mere water;” the writer of the letter calls them Pyghards, so named, he says, from a

* Meshov. l. 1. c. 2, 3.

† Inter Colomes. Collect. apud Wall's History of Infant Baptism, Part II. p. 200.

Waldenses in England.

certain refugee that came thither 97 years before the date of the letter. Pope Innocent the third, under whom was the Lateran Council, A. D. 1215, has, in the Decretals a letter, in answer to a letter from the bishop of Arles in Provence, which had represented to him,* that “some hereticks there had taught, that it was to no purpose to baptize children, since they could have no forgiveness of sins thereby, as having no faith, charity, &c.” So that it is a clear point, that there were some that set themselves against infant baptism in the thirteenth century, three hundred years before the reformation; yea, in the twelfth century there were some that opposed Pædobaptism. Mr. Fox, the Martyrologist, relates from the history of Robert Guisburne,† that two men, Gerhardus and Dulcinus in the reign of Henry the second, about the year of our Lord 1158: who, he supposes, had received some light of knowledge of the Waldenses, brought thirty with them into England; who, by the king and the prelates, were all burnt in the forehead, and so driven out of the realm; and after were slain by the pope. Rapin‡ calls them German hereticks, and places their coming into England, in the year 1166; but William of Newbury§ calls them Publicans, and only mentions Gerhardus, as at the head of them, and whom he allows to be somewhat learned, but all the rest very illiterate, and says they came from Gascoigne; and being convened before a council, held at Oxford for that purpose; and being interrogated concerning articles of faith, said perverse things concerning the divine sacraments, detesting holy baptism, the eucharist and marriage: and his

* Opera Innocent. Tertii, Tom. II. p. 776. apud Wall, ibid. p. 178.

† Acts and Monuments, vol. i. p. 262.

‡ History of England, vol. i. p. 233.

§ Neubrigensis de Rebus Anglicanis, l. 2. c. 13. p. 155.

Peter Bruis, and Henry,

Annotator Picardus, out of a MS. of Radulph, the monk, shews that the hereticks, called Publicans, affirm, that we must not pray for the dead; that the suffrages of the saints were not to be asked; that they believe not purgatory; with many other things; and particularly, *asserunt isti Parvulos non baptisandos donec ad intelligibilem perveniant Aetatem.* "They assert that infants are not to be baptized, till they "come to the age of understanding."* In the year 1147, St. Bernard wrote a letter to the Earl of St. Gyles, complaining of his harbouring Henry, a heretick; and among other things he is charged with by him, are these; "the infants of christians are hindered from the life of Christ, the "grace of baptism being denied them; nor are they suffered "to come to their salvation, though our Saviour compassionately cries out in their behalf, *Suffer little children to come "to me, &c.*" and about the same time, writing upon the Canticles in his 65th and 66th sermons, he takes notice of a sort of people, he calls Apostolici, and who, perhaps, were the followers of Henry; who, says he, laugh at us for baptizing infants;† and among the tenets which he ascribes to them, and attempts to confute, this is the first; "Infants "are not to be baptized:" in opposition to which, he affirms, that infants are to be baptized in the faith of the church; and endeavours by instances to show, that the faith of one is profitable to others;‡ which he attempts from Matt. ix. 2. and xv. 28. 1 Tim. ii. 15. In the year 1146, Peter Bruis, and Henry his follower, set themselves against infant baptism. Petrus Cluniacensis, or Peter the abbot of Clugny, wrote against them; and among other errors he imputes to them are these: "That infants are not baptized, or

* Not. in ibid. p. 720—723.

+ Wall, ibid. p. 175, 176.

‡ Hist. Eccl. Magdeburg. Cent. XII. c. 5. p. 338, 339.

oppose Infant baptism.

“ saved by the faith of another, but ought to be baptized,
 “ and saved by their own faith; or that baptism without
 “ their own faith does not save; and that those that are
 “ baptized in infancy, when grown up, should be baptized
 “ again; nor are they then rebaptized, but rather rightly
 “ baptized:”* and that these men did deny infant baptism,
 “ and pleaded for adult baptism, Mr. Stennet† has proved
 “ from Cassander and Prateolus, both Pædobaptists: and
 Dr. Wall‡ allows these two men to be Antipædobaptists;
 and says, “ they were the first Antipædobaptist preachers
 “ that ever set up a church, or society of men, holding
 “ that opinion against infant baptism, and rebaptizing such
 “ as had been baptized in infancy;” and who also observes, §
 that the Lateran council, under Innocent the second, 1139,
 did condemn Peter Bruis, and Arnold of Brescia, who seems
 to have been a follower of Bruis, for rejecting infant bap-
 tism: moreover, in the year 1140, or a little before it,
 Evervinus, of the diocese of Cologne, wrote a letter to St. Ber-
 nard, in which he gives him an account of some hereticks
 lately discovered in that country, of whom he says, “ they
 “ condemn the sacraments, except baptism only; and this
 “ only in those who are come to age; who, they say, are
 “ baptized by Christ himself, whoever be the minister of the
 “ sacraments: they do not believe infant baptism, alleging
 “ that place of the gospel, *he that believeth, and is baptized,*
 “ *shall be saved.*” || These seem also to be the disciples
 of Peter Bruis, who began to preach about the year 1126;
 so that it is out of all doubt, that this was a matter of

* Hist. Eccl. Magdeburg. Cent. XII. c. 5. p. 332.

† Answer to Russen, p. 83, 84.

‡ History of Infant Baptism, Part II. p. 184.

§ Ibid. p. 179.

|| Wall, *ibid.* p. 172]

Bruno, and Berengarius,

debate, four hundred years before the madman of Munster set themselves against it: and a hundred years before these, there were two men, Bruno, bishop of Angiers, and Berengarius, archdeacon of the same church, who began to spread their particular notions about the year 1035, which chiefly respected the sacraments of baptism and the Lord's Supper. What they said about the former, may be learned from the letter sent by Deodwinus, bishop of Liege, to Henry I. King of France; in which are the following words: *—“ There
 “ is a report come out of France, and which goes through all
 “ Germany, that these two (Bruno and Berengarius) do main-
 “ tain, that the Lord's body (the Host) is not the body, but
 “ a shadow and figure of the Lord's body; and that they do
 “ disannul lawful marriages: and as far as in them lies, over-
 “ throw the baptism of infants:” and from Guimundus, bishop of Aversa, who wrote against Berengarius, who says,
 “ That he did not teach rightly concerning the baptism of
 “ infants, and concerning marriage.” † Mr. Stennet ‡ relates from Dr. Allix, a passage concerning one Gundulphus and his followers in Italy; divers of whom, Gerard, bishop of Cambray and Arras, interrogated upon several heads in the year 1025: and among other things, that bishop mentions the following reason, which they gave against infant baptism;
 “ because to an infant, that neither wills nor runs, that knows
 “ nothing of faith, is ignorant of its own salvation and wel-
 “ fare, in whom there can be no desire of regeneration or
 “ confession; the will, faith and confession of another seem
 “ not in the least to appertain.” Dr. Wall, indeed, represents these men the disciples of Gundalphus, as Quakers

* Apud Wall, *ibid.* p. 159.

† Hist. Eccl. Magdeburg, Cent. XI. c. 5. p. 116.

‡ Answer to Russen, p. 84, 85.

oppose Infant baptism.

and Manichees in the point of baptism, holding that water baptism is of no use to any: but it must be affirmed, whatever their principles were, that their argument against infant baptism was very strong. So then, we have testimonies that Pædobaptism was opposed five hundred years before the affair of Munster. And if the Pelagians, Donatists, and Luciferians, so called from Lucifer Calaritanus, a very orthodox man, and a great opposer of the Arians, were against infant baptism, as several Pædobaptist writers affirm; this carries the opposition to it still higher; and indeed it may seem strange, that since it had not its establishment till the times of Austin, that there should be none to set themselves against it; and if there were none, how comes it to pass that such a canon should be made in the Milevitan council, under Pope Innocent the first, according to Carranza;* and in the year 402, as say the Magdeburgensian Centuriators;† or be it in the council at Carthage, in the year 418, as says Dr. Wall,‡ which runs thus; “Also, it is our pleasure, that
 “ whoever denies that new-born infants are to be baptized;
 “ or says, they are indeed to be baptized for the remission of
 “ sins; and yet they derive no original sin from Adam to be
 “ expiated by the washing of regeneration; (from whence it
 “ follows, that the form of baptism for the forgiveness of sins
 “ in them, cannot be understood to be true, but false) let him
 “ be anathema:” but if there were none that opposed the
 “ baptism of new-born infants, why should the first part of
 “ this canon be made, and an anathema annexed to it? To
 say that it respected a notion of a single person in Cyprian’s
 time, 150 years before this, that infants were not to be baptized
 until eight days old; (C) and that it seems there were

* Summa Concil. p. 122, 123.

† Cent. V. c. 9. p. 463.

‡ History, &c. Part II. p. 275, 276.

Waldensian Christians.

some people still of this opinion, wants proof. But however, certain it is, that Tertullian,* in the beginning of the third century, opposed the baptism of infants, and dissuaded from it, who is the first writer that makes mention of it: so it appears, that as soon as ever it was set on foot, it became matter of debate; and sooner than this it could not be: and this was thirteen hundred years before the madmen of Munster appeared in the world. But,

IV. Let us next consider the practice of the ancient Waldenses, with respect to adult baptism, which this author affirms to be a chimerical imagination, and groundless figment. It should be observed, that the people called Waldenses, or the Vaudois, inhabiting the vallies of Piedmont, have gone under different names, taken from their principal leaders and teachers; and so this of the Waldenses, from Peter Waldo, one of their barbs, or pastors; though some think this name is only a corruption of Vallenses, the inhabitants of the vallies: and certain it is, there were a people there before the times of Waldo, and even from the apostles' time, that held the pure evangelic truths, and bore a testimony to them in all ages, and throughout the dark times of popery, as many learned men have observed;† and the sense of these people concerning baptism may be best understood,

1. By what their ancient barbs or pastors taught concerning it. Peter Bruis, and Henry his successor, were both, as Morland affirms,‡ their ancient barbs and pastors; and

* De Baptismo, c. 18.

† Dr. Allix's Remarks on the ancient churches of Piedmont, p. 188, 207, 210, 286. Morland's History of the evangelical churches of the vallies of Piedmont. B. 1. c. 3. p. 8, &c. Et Bezæ Icones apud ibid. Introduction to the History, p. 7.

‡ History, B. 1. ch. 8. p. 184.

Lollards in England.

from them these people were called Petrobrussians and Henricians; and we have seen already that these two men were Antipædobaptists, denied infant baptism, and pleaded for adult baptism. Arnoldus of Brixia, or Brescia, was another of their barbs, and is the first mentioned by Morland, from whom these people were called Arnoldists. Of this man Dr. Allix says,* that besides being charged with some ill opinions, it was said of him, that he was not sound in his sentiments concerning the sacrament of the altar, and the baptism of infants; and Dr. Wall allows,† that the Lateran council, under Innocent the second, 1139, did condemn Peter Bruis, and Arnold of Brescia, who seems to have been a follower of Bruis, for rejecting infant baptism. Lollardo was another of their barbs, who, as Morland says, was in great reputation with them for having conveyed the knowledge of their doctrine into England, where his disciples were known by the name of Lollards; who were charged with holding, that the sacrament of baptism used in the church by water, is but a light matter, and of small effect; that christian people be sufficiently baptized in the blood of Christ, and need no water; and that infants be sufficiently baptized, if their parents be baptized before them.‡ All which seem to arise from their denying of infant baptism, and the efficacy of it to take away sin.

2. By their ancient confessions of faith, and other writings which have been published. In one of these, bearing date A. D. 1120, the 12th and 13th articles run thus:§ “We do believe that the sacraments are signs of the holy thing, or

* Remarks, &c. p. 171, 172.

† History of Infant Baptism, Part II p. 179

‡ Fox's Acts and Monuments, vol. i. p. 868.

§ Morland's History, &c. B. I. ch. 4. p. 34.

Ancient Confessions of Faith.

“ visible forms of the invisible grace; accounting it good,
 “ that the faithful sometimes use the said signs, or visible
 “ forms, if it may be done. However, we believe and hold,
 “ that the abovesaid faithful may be saved without receiving
 “ the signs aforesaid, in case they have no place, nor any
 “ means to use them. We acknowledge no other sacrament
 “ but baptism and the Lord’s supper.” And in another an-
 cient confession, without a date, the 7th article is: * “ We
 “ believe that in the sacrament of baptism, water is the visi-
 “ ble and external sign, which represents unto us that which
 “ (by the invisible virtue of God operating) is within us;
 “ namely, the renovation of the Spirit, and the mortification
 “ of our members in Jesus Christ; *by which also we are*
 “ *received into the holy congregation of the people of God, there*
 “ *protesting and declaring openly our faith, and amendment of*
 “ *life.*” In a tract, † written in the language of the ancient
 inhabitants of the vallies, in the year 1100, called the Noble
 Lesson, are these words; speaking of the apostles it is ob-
 served of them, “ they spoke without fear of the doctrine of
 “ Christ; they preached to Jews and Greeks, working many
 “ miracles, and those that believed they baptized in the name
 “ of Jesus Christ.” And in a treatise concerning antichrist,
 which contains many sermons of the barbs, collected in the
 year 1120, and so speaks the sense of their ancient pastors
 before this time, stands the following passage: ‡ “ The third
 “ work of antichrist consists in this, that he attributes the
 “ regeneration of the holy Spirit unto the dead outward
 “ work (or faith) *baptizing children in that faith*, and teach-
 “ ing, that thereby baptism and regeneration must be had,
 “ and therein he confers and bestows orders and other sacra-

* Morland’s History, p. 38.

† Ibid. ch. 6, p. 99, 112.

‡ Ibid. ch. 7. p. 142, 143.

Baptists in Bohemia.

“ments, and groundeth therein all his christianity, which is against the holy Spirit.” There are indeed two confessions of theirs, which are said to speak of infant baptism; but these are of a late date, both of them in the sixteenth century; and the earliest is not a confession of the Waldenses or Vaudois in the vallies of Piedmont, but of the Bohemians, said to be presented to Ladislaus, king of Bohemia, A. D. 1508, and afterwards amplified and explained, and presented to Ferdinand king of Bohemia, A. D. 1535; and it should be observed, that those people say, that they were falsely called Waldenses;* whereas it is certain there were a people in Bohemia that came out of the vallies, and sprung from the old Waldenses, and were truly so, who denied infant baptism, as that sort of them called Pyghards or Picards; who, near a hundred years before the reformation, as we have seen by the letter sent to Erasmus out of Bohemia, rebaptized persons that joined in communion with them; and Scultetus,† in his annals on the year 1528, says, that the united brethren in Bohemia, and other godly persons of that time, were rebaptized; not that they patronized the errors of the Anabaptists, (meaning such that they were charged with, which had no relation to baptism) but because they could not see how they could otherwise separate themselves from an unclean world. The other confession is indeed made by the ministers and heads of the churches in the vallies, assembled in Angrogne, Sep. 12, 1532.‡ Now it should be known, that this was made after that “Peter Masson and George “Morell were sent into Germany in the year 1530, as Mor- “land says,§ to treat with the chief ministers of Germany,

* Morland's History, ch. 4. p. 43.

† Apud Hoornbeck. Summa Controvers. 1. 5. p. 387.

‡ Morland, *ibid.* ch. 4. p. 39.

§ *Ibid.* ch. 8. p. 185.

Ancient Confessions.

“ viz. Oecolampadius, Bucer, and others, touching the re-
“ formation of their churches; but Peter Masson was taken
“ prisoner at Dijon.” However, as Fox says,* Morell
“ escaped, and returned alone to Merindol with the books
“ and letters he brought with him from the churches of Ger-
“ many; and declared to his brethren all the points of his
“ commission; and opened unto them, how many and great
“ errors they were in; into the which their old ministers,
“ whom they called barbs, that is to say uncles, had brought
“ them, leading them from the right way of true religion.”
After which, this confession was drawn up, signed, and
swore to: from hence we learn where they might get this
notion, which was now become matter of great debate in
Switzerland and Germany; and yet after all this, I am in-
clined to think that the words of the article in the said con-
fession, are to be so understood as not to relate to infant
baptism: they are these:† “ We have but two sacramental
“ signs left us by Jesus Christ; the one is baptism, the other
“ is the eucharist, which we receive, to shew that our perse-
“ verance in the faith is such as we promised when we were
“ baptized, being little children.” This phrase, *being little
children*, as I think, means their being little children in
knowledge and experience, when they were baptized; since
they speak of their receiving the eucharist, to shew their
perseverance in the faith they then had promised to perse-
vere in: besides, if this is to be understood of them as infants
in a literal sense, what promise were they capable of making
when such? Should it be said, that they promised by their
sureties, it should be observed, that the Waldenses did not
admit of godfathers and godmothers in baptism; this is one

* Acts and Monuments, vol. ii. p. 186.

† Morland, *ibid.* c. 4. p. 41.

Opinion of Ludovicus Vives.

of the abuses their ancient barbs complained of in baptism, as administered by the papists.* Besides, in a brief confession of faith, published by the reformed churches of Piedmont, so late as A. D. 1655, they have these words in favour of adult baptism;† “that God does not only instruct and teach us by his word, but has also ordained certain sacraments to be joined with it, *as a means to unite us unto Christ, and to make us partakers of his benefits*: and there are only two of them belonging in common to all the members of the church under the new testament; to wit, baptism and the Lord’s supper; that God has ordained the sacrament of baptism to be a testimony of our adoption and of our being cleansed from our sins by the blood of Jesus Christ, and renewed in holiness of life:” nor is there one word in it of infant baptism. Upon the whole, it will be easily seen what little reason the writer of the dialogue under consideration had to say, that the ancient Waldenses, being in the constant practice of adult baptism, is a chimerical imagination, and a groundless fiction; since there is nothing appears to the contrary, but that they were in the practice of it until the sixteenth century; for what is urged against it, is since that time: and even at that time there were some that continued in the practice of it; for Ludovicus Vives, who wrote in the said century, having observed, that “formerly no person was brought to the holy baptistry till he was of adult age, and when he both understood what that mystical water meant, and desired to be washed in it, yea, desired it more than once,” adds the following words; “I hear in some cities in Italy, the old custom is still in a great measure preserved.”‡ Now,

* Morland, *ibid.* c. 7. p. 173.† *Ibid.* c. 4. p. 61, 67.‡ *Audio in quibusdam Italiae Urbibus morem veterem magna ex parte adhuc conservari. Comment. in Aug. de Civ. Dei, Lib. I. c. 27.*

Criticism on Greek words.

what people should he mean by some cities of Italy, unless the remainders of the Petrobrussians, or Waldenses, as Dr. Wall* observes, who continued that practice in the vallies of Piedmont: and it should be observed, that there were different sects that went by the name of Waldenses, and some of them of very bad principles; some of them were Manichees, and held other errors: and indeed it was usual for the papists in former times, to call all by this name that dissented from them; so that it need not be wondered at, if some, bearing this name, were for infant baptism, and others not. The Vaudois in the vallies, are the people chiefly to be regarded; and it will not be denied, that of late years infant baptism has obtained among them: but that the ancient Waldenses practised it, wants proof.

But it will be necessary to say a little “*concerning the mode of administering the ordinance of baptism, whether by immersion or by sprinkling.*”

“The author of the dialogue under consideration affirms, that there is not one single lexicographer or critic upon the Greek language, he has ever seen, but what agrees, that though the word *baptizo* sometimes signifies to *dip*, yet it also naturally signifies to *wash*; and that washing, in any mode whatsoever, is the native signification of the word *baptismos*, (p. 31.); that the words *baptize* and *baptism*, (as used in the new testament) do not, from their signification, make *dipping* or *plunging* the necessary mode of administering the ordinance, p. 33. —

As to the lexicographers and critics on the Greek language, they agree that the word βαπτίζω, *baptizo*, signifies, in its first and primary sense, to *dip* or *plunge*, and only in a

* History of Infant Baptism, Part II. c. 2. p. 12.

Baptizo—Baptizomai.

secondary and consequential sense, to *wash*, but never to *pour* or *sprinkle*, there being no proper washing, but what is by dipping; and for this we appeal to all the writers of this kind, and even to those this author mentions.

Scapula, the first of them, renders βαπτίζω, *baptizo*, by *mergo, seu immergo, ut quæ tingendi, aut abluendi gratia aquæ immergimus*, “to dip or plunge into, as what for the sake of “dying or washing we dip into water;” *item mergo, submergo, obruo aqua*, “also to plunge, plunge under, overwhelm in water;” *item abluo, lavo*, also to wash off, wash;” and βαπτίζομαι, *baptizomai*, he renders, by *mergor, submergor*, “to be plunged, plunged under;” and observes, that it is used metaphorically for *obruor*, to be overwhelmed; and βαπτισμός, *baptismos*, and βαπτισμα, *baptisma*, he says, is, *mersio, lotio, ablutio, ipse immergendi, item lavandi, seu abluendi actus*, “plunging, washing, ablution, the act itself of “plunging, also of washing or ablution.” In all which, he makes dipping, or plunging, to be the first and preferable sense of the words.

Stephens gives the same sense of the words, and so Schrevelius, who renders βαπτίζω, by *baptizo, mergo, lavo*, baptize, plunge, wash. Pasor only renders it *baptizo*, baptize, without determining its sense. And Leigh, in his *Critica Sacra*, observes, that “the nature and proper signification of it is, “to dip into water, or to plunge under water;” and refers to John iii. 22, 23. Matt. iii. 16. Acts viii. 38. And cites Casaubon, Bucanus, Bullinger, and Zanchy, as agreeing and testifying to this sense of it; and *baptisma*, he says, is “dipping into water, or washing with water.” And these are the lexicographers and critics our author refers us to: to which I may add the lexicon, compiled by Budæus, Constantine, and others, who render the word βαπτίζω, *baptizo*, by *immergo*,

Baptizein—Baptein.

mergo, intingo, lavacro tingo, abluo, madefacio, lavo, mundo; plunge, plunge into, dip into, dip in a laver, wash off, make wet, wash, cleanse: and βαπτισμος, baptismos, they say, is tingendi, hoc est mergendi, Actio, in quo significatu Tinctura dicitur. “The action of tinging, that is, of plunging; in “which signification it is called a tincture,” or dying; and another by Hadrian Junius, who renders βαπτίζω, by immergo, to plunge into; and βαπτισμος, baptismos, by immersio, lotio, baptismus, immersion, washing, baptism.

As for other critics on the Greek language, who assert, that the proper signification of the word *baptizo*, is to *dip*, or *plunge*; they are so numerous, that it would be tedious to reckon them up: I shall only mention a few of them, and their words. Calvin* says, “*Ipsum baptizandi Verbum “mergere significat, & mergendi Ritum veteri Ecclesiæ observatum fuisse constat.*” The word, *baptize*, signifies to *plunge*; “and it is plain that the rite of plunging was observed in “the ancient church.” Beza, who must be allowed to be a learned critic in the Greek language, says, on Mark vii. 4. “*Neque vero το βαπτίζειν, το baptizein, significat lavare, nisi a “consequenti, nam proprie declarat tingendi Causa immergere.*” Neither does the word *baptizo* signify to *wash*, unless con- “sequentially; for it properly signifies, to *plunge into*, for “the sake of tinging,” or dying; and “on Matt. iii. 11. he “says, significat autem το βαπτίζειν, το baptizein, tingere, quum “παρά το βαπτειν, para to baptein, dicatur, & quum tingenda “mergantur. The word *baptizo*, signifies to *dip* (as dyers “in the *Vatt*) seeing it comes from *bapto*, to *dip*, and seeing “things, that are to be dyed, are dipped.” Casaubon, another great critic on the Greek language, has these words on Matt. iii. 6. “*Hic enim fuit baptizandi Ritus ut in Aquas*

* Institut. L. IV. c. 15. § 19.

Baptizein—Baptizo.

“immergerentur, quod vel ipso Vox βαπτίζειν, baptizein, decla-
 “rat satis—unde intelligimus non esse ab re, quod jam pridem
 “nonnulli disputarant de toto Corpore immergendo in Cere-
 “monia baptismi; vocem enim βαπτίζειν, baptizein, urgebant.
 “For this was the rite of baptizing, that persons should be
 “plunged into water, which the word baptizo sufficiently
 “declares; hence, we understand, that it was not foreign
 “from the matter, which some, sometime ago, disputed,
 “concerning plunging the whole body in the ceremony of
 “baptism; for they urged the signification of the word,
 “baptizo.” And, that this is the proper signification of the
 word, he observes, in his notes on Acts i. 5. and ii. 4. To
 which I shall only add one more critic, and that is Grotius;
 who, on Matt. iii. 6. thus writes; “*Mersatione autem non*
 “*perfusionē agi solitum hunc Ritum indicat & Vocis proprietas,*
 “*& Loca ad eum Ritum delecta,* (John iii. 23. Acts viii. 38.)
 “*& Allusiones multæ Apostolorum quæ ad Aspersionem referri*
 “*non possunt,* (Rom. vi. 3. Col. ii. 12.) That this rite used
 “to be performed by plunging, and not by pouring, both
 “the propriety of the word, and the places chosen for this
 “rite shew, (John iii. 23. Acts viii. 38.) and the many allu-
 “sions of the apostles, which cannot be referred to sprinkling,
 “(Rom. vi. 3, 4. Col. ii. 12.) I might have here subjoined
 some instances of the use of the word in Greek authors, by
 which it appears to have the sense of dipping and plunging,
 and not of pouring or sprinkling; but this has been largely
 done by Dr. Gale and others, (D)

Wherefore, upon the whole, let the reader judge which
 is the most proper and significative rite, used in the admini-
 stration of the ordinance of baptism; whether immersion,
 which is the proper and primary sense of the word baptism,
 and is confirmed to be the rite used, by the places in which

Innovations dangerous.

baptism was administered; and by several scriptural instances and examples of it, as well as by allusive expressions; and which fitly represents the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ: or, sprinkling, which the word baptism never signifies, and is not confirmed by any of the said ways; nor does it represent any thing for which baptism is administered. Let it be therefore seriously considered, what a daring thing it is to introduce into this ordinance subjects which Christ never appointed, and a mode of administering it, never used by him or his apostles. In matters of worship, God is a jealous God. The case of Nadab and Abihu ought to be remembered by us, who offered strange fire which the Lord commanded not. In things relating to religious worship, as this ordinance of baptism is a part of divine worship, we ought to have a direction from God, either a precept or a precedent: and we ought to keep to the rule, both as to matter and manner, and not dare to innovate in either, lest it should be said to us, *Who hath required this at your hands?* and become chargeable with will-worship, and with *teaching for doctrines the commandments of men.*

THE
HISTORY OF BAPTISM
IN ENGLAND.

CHAP. I.

INTRODUCTION OF THE GOSPEL.

IT is generally supposed, that the gospel was introduced at a very early period into this country, which, at the commencement of the Christian æra, was, like other heathen nations, full of the habitations of cruelty. Our forefathers were, if their own historians may be credited, gross idolaters, and were accustomed to offer up their prisoners taken in war, as sacrifices to their gods. It is said, they made a statue, or image of a man of a prodigious size, whose limbs consisted of twigs woven together after the manner of basket-work; this they filled with living men, and setting it on fire, burned them to death!

There are different opinions respecting the time when the gospel was first preached in Britain, and also by whom the message of salvation was at first proclaimed. Bishop Newton says, "There is some probability that the gospel was preached here by Simon the apostle; there is much greater probability that it was preached here by St. Paul; and there is absolute certainty that Christianity was planted here in the times of the apostles, before the destruction of Jerusalem."

"Pomponia Græcina, the wife of Plautius, a Roman General, who commanded in England in the year 45, is thought from a sentence in the Annals of Tacitus to have been a Christian, and the first in Britain. Tacitus says,

The first British Christian.

“Also Pomponia Græcina, an illustrious woman, married to Plautius, (who on his return from Britain entered the city with the pomp of an Ovation) but accused of a foreign superstition, was left to the decision of her husband.”* The wife of Plautius, and Claudia Ruffina, a british lady, are supposed to be of the saints that were in Cæsar’s houshold, mentioned by Paul, Phil. iv. 22. Claudia is celebrated by Martial for her admirable beauty and learning, in the following epigram;

“From painted Britons how was Claudia† born!

The fair barbarian! how do arts adorn!

When Roman charms a Grecian soul commend,

Athens and Rome may for the dame contend.”‡

Speed, a very ancient British author, says, that “Claudia sent Paul’s writings, which he calls spiritual manna, unto her friends in Britain, to feed their souls with the bread of life: and also, the writings of Martial, to instruct their minds with those lessons best fitting to produce moral virtues:” which Speed thinks was the occasion of this line in Martial’s works—

“And Britain now (they say) our verses learn to sing.”§

Gildas, the most ancient and authentic British historian, who wrote about A. D. 564, in his book called *De Vict. Aurelli Ambrossii*, affirms, that the Britons received the gospel under Tiberius, the emperor under whom Christ suffered; and that many evangelists were sent from the apostles into this nation, who were the first planters of the gospel, and which, he elsewhere says, continued with them until the cruel persecution of Dioclesian the emperor, about A. D. 290.

Fuller, in his Ecclesiastical History, says, “It is generally agreed, that about the year 167, many pagan temples in

* Annalium lib. xiii. §. xxxii.

† 2 Tim. iv. 21.

‡ Rapin, vol. i. p. 14.

§ p. 73.

Lucius, the first christian king.

Britain had their property altered, and that they were converted into Christian churches; particularly that dedicated to Diana in London, and another near it formerly consecrated to Apollo, in the city now called Westminster.”*

This account is corroborated by Fox, the English martyr-ologist, who says, “Out of an ancient book of the antiquities of England, we find the epistle of Eleutherius, written to Lucius king of Britain, A. D. 169, who had written to Eleutherius for the Roman laws to govern by: in answer to which, Eleutherius says, ‘You have received, through God’s mercy, in the realm of Britany, the law and faith of Christ; you have with you both the parts of the scripture; out of them, by God’s grace, with the council of the realm, take ye a law, and by that law, by God’s sufferance, rule your kingdom of Britain.”†

Hollingshead mentions this epistle of Eleutherius, in such language as proves him to have understood the genuine principles of the gospel;‡ and speaks highly respecting king Lucius; of whom there is a curious piece of information on a brass plate in the church of St. Peter’s, Cornhill. This plate is inclosed in an antique frame of oak, and relates as follows: “Bee it knowne to all men that in the yeare of our Lorde God 179, *Lucius* the first Christian king of this Land, then called Britaine, Founded the first church in London: that is to say, the church of St. Peter upon Cornehill: and hee founded there an Archbishop’s See, and made that Church the Metropolitane and chiefe Church of this Kingdome, and so it endured the space of 400 yeares and more unto the coming of St. Austin the apostle of England. The which was sent into this land by St. Gregorie the Doctor of

* Ecclesiastical History, B. p. 13.

† Fox’s Martyr. v, i. 117.

‡ vol. i. p. 25.

Constantine the Great, a Briton.

the Church in the time of King Ethelbert: And then was the Archbishop's See and Pall removed from the foresaid Church of St. Peter upon Cornehill vnto Dorobernia, that now is called Canterburie, and there it remaineth to this day, and Millet a Monke which came into this land with St. Austin, Hee was made first Bishop of London, and his See was made in Pavl's Church, and this *Lucius* King was the first fovnder of St. Peter's Church upon Cornehill, and hee reigned King in this Land after Brute 1245, Yeares. And in the yeare of our Lorde God 124, *Lucius* was crowned King, and the yeares of his reigne were 77 yeares and hee was buried (after some Chronicles) at London: and after some Chronicles hee was buried at Glocester, in that place where the order of St. Francis standeth now."

From the conversion of *Lucius* till the time of the persecution under Dioclesian, the ecclesiastical history of Britain is entirely unknown. That the Christian religion, however, made great progress during that interval of eight years, seems probable from Tertullian, Orgien, Bede, and Gildas.

After Christianity was established by Constantine the great, it appears that Christians multiplied exceedingly, and that the island abounded with churches. This celebrated emperor being a native of Britain, as was also, according to Bishop Stillingfleet and some others, Helene, his mother, it is highly probable that he showed particular favour to his countrymen, by affording them his protection. Speed says, "Constantine the great was born and brought up here in Britaine by queen Helene, a most virtuous and religious lady, unto whose days the succession of Christianity did here continue as by the martyrdom of many saints in the reign of Dioclesian, is apparent." *

British bishops at foreign Councils.

Some affirm there were British bishops at the council of Nice, A. D. 325. But though this cannot be fully proved, it is not at all unlikely, since twenty-two years after, there were certainly three British bishops at the council of Arles, who are supposed to have been those of London, York, and Caer-leon in Wales. There were also some at the council of Arminum in 359; but so poor, that their charges were borne by their brethren. Du Pin says, "The bishops of France and Britain chose rather to bear their own expences than accept of the emperor's allowance, which they thought it beneath them to do."*

About the year 448, the Saxons began to settle in Britain; and for more than a century were perpetually harassing the natives, till they forced them to retire from their country, and settle in Wales. Their cruelties are described in a very affecting manner by Bede and Gildas, the latter of whom says, "From the east to the west nothing was to be seen but churches burnt and destroyed to their very foundations. The inhabitants were extirpated by the sword, and buried under the ruins of their own houses. The altars were daily profaned by the blood of those slain thereon."† It is very unaccountable, that after this statement, he should blame the Britons for suffering their neighbours to live so long in paganism. How was it possible that they could, with any prospect of success, attempt to convert them, by whom they were so cruelly treated, and who were endeavouring to exterminate them?

After they were driven into Wales, whither their invaders could not follow them, religion began again to flourish. Two large societies were formed; one at Bangor in the north, the other at Caer-leon in the south. From the fol-

* Rapin's History of England, p. 29.

† Ibid, p. 44.

Austin the monk arrives in England.

lowing account, it should seem that these institutions resembled that now formed by the *Baptist missionaries* at Serampore, where one fund is established, from which the wants of all, however differently engaged, are supplied.

Danvers informs us, that "In Bangor was a college containing 2100 Christians, who dedicated themselves to the Lord to serve him in the ministry as they became capable, to whom was attributed the name of the *monks of Bangor*. Yet did they no ways accord with the popish monks of that or the following age? for they were not reduced to any ecclesiastical order, but were for the most part laymen, who laboured with their hands, married and followed their callings: only some of them, whose spirits the Lord fitted and inclined to his more immediate service, devoted themselves to the study of the scriptures, and other holy exercises, in order, to the work of the ministry, who sent out many useful instruments."*

In this state was religion in Wales, when Austin the monk was sent into England by Gregory the seventh, bishop of Rome, with the design of converting the Saxons, or English and bringing them into conformity to the church of Rome. To accomplish this, "Gregory ordered him not to pull down the idol temples, but convert them into Christian churches. The reason of this injunction was this; that the natives, by frequenting the same temples they had been always accustomed to, might be the less shocked at their entrance into Christianity: and therefore his Holiness directed that the idols should be destroyed, and those places of worship sprinkled with holy water."†

This was in the year 596, when Ethelbert was king of Kent. At his court, Augustin opened his mission, which

* History of Baptism, p. 336.

† Biog. Brit. Art. *Augustin*.

Austin's conference.

was attended with such success, that the king, and his queen Bertha, and a great number of his subjects, very soon made a public profession of Christianity. The king was so zealous a convert, that he bequeathed his own palace to the church, and retired to Reculver, that Austin might be more at his ease at Canterbury. Notwithstanding all these favours, and the princely style in which he lived, this pious apostle could enjoy no content while the British clergy lived independent of his authority, and were not in a state of subjection to the bishop of Rome.

Independently, therefore, of the desire which Austin had to diffuse the knowledge of the gospel in general, we find he was particularly zealous for his own authority, and extremely desirous to subject the British Christians in the remote parts of the island to his metropolitan jurisdiction, and to the doctrine and discipline of the church of Rome. This circumstance is the more remarkable, as the British bishops of that age had more enlarged views of things; accordingly they disclaimed all submission to the church of Rome, and nobly asserted their independence.

The account of a conference which Austin held with some of the Christians of the college of Bangor, is thus related by Robert Fabian: "By the helpe of Ethelberte he assembled and gathered the byshoppes, and doctours of Britayne that were before disparkled. The place of Assemble was called long after, Austin's Oke; which is expounded to be Austeyn's strengthe, and is in the march of Wikerres and of the west Saxons. In this place he charged the sayd bi-shoppes, that they should with him preach the worde of God to the Anglis; and also that they should amonge themselves amend certain errours, then used in the churche: and specially for kepeing of their Easter tide, wher against

British bishops refuse his terms.

the byshoppes of Britayne held opinion til Austayne shewed them a myracle by a blind Anglis or Saxon. After the which myracle shewed, the sayd byshoppes replied to the will of Austayne in that cause. But for all this, there was of them that said, that they might not leave the custome which they so longe had continued, without assente of al such as had used the same. Then he gathered a synode, to the which came seven byshoppes of Brytons with the wysest men of that famous abbey of Bagor. But first, they took counsel of an holy man, wher they should be obediente to Austayne or not. And he said, yf ye find him humble, or meke, as to Christes disciple belongeth; that then they should asēt to him, which mekenes thei shoude perceave in him, yf he at their comming into the synode, or councell, arose agayne them. When the sayde bishops entered the sayd synode, Austain sat styl in the chaire, and removed not: whereupon they were wroth and disdayned him and would not obey his requestes.

“He then sayd, Sins ye wol not asēt to my hestes generally assent ye to me specially in iii things.

“The first is, that ye kepe Ester in due fourme and time as it is ordayned.

“The second, THAT YE GIVE CHRISTENDOME TO CHILDREN. And the thyrde is, that ye preache unto the Anglis the worde of God as aforetimes I have exhorted you. And all the other deale, I shall suffer you to amend and refourm within yourselves: *but they would not thereof.* Then Austayne sayd unto them, and warned them by manner of inspyration, That since they wold not receave peace of theyr brethren, they shoulde of other receave warre and wretche: the which was after put in experience by Ethelfridus King of Northumberland.”*

* Fabian's Chron. part v. p. 115, 146.

Geoffrey of Monmouth's account.

Nicholson, in his English Historical Library, after exposing some pious frauds, says, "Bede's account of the remonstrance of Dinoth, abbot of Bangor, against the pretensions of this legate Augustine, challenging a supremacy for his master, is of better credit. The critique of Bishop Stillingfleet on it deserves attention. "There is (he says) all the appearance of ingenuity and faithfulness that can be expected; and he [Bede] was a person of too great judgment and sagacity to be easily imposed upon by a modern invention, or a new formed schedule."

This account is confirmed by other ancient writers. Geoffrey of Monmouth tells us, that "in the country of the Britons Christianity flourished, which never decayed even from the apostles' time; amongst whom, says he, was the preaching of the gospel, sincere doctrine, and living faith, and such form of worship as was delivered to the churches by the apostles themselves; and that they even to death withstood the Romish rites and ceremonies; and that as long as the British churches possessed the country, they kept themselves sound in the faith, and pure in the worship, order, and discipline of Christ, as it was delivered to them from the apostles and evangelists."*

Fuller, in his Ecclesiastical History,† has translated some verses of the ancient bard, Talliessyn, recorded in the chronicle of Wales; which show how much they opposed Romish innovations.

"Wo be to the priest unborn,
That will not cleanly weed his corne
And preach his flock among;
Wo be to that shepherd, I say,
That will not watch his fold alway,
As to his office doth belong.

* Danvers, p. 334.

† Book ii. p. 69.

Ten thousand Britons baptized.

Wo be to him that doth not keep,
From *Romish* wolves his sheep,
With staff and weapon strong."

Rapin is of opinion, that Austin died before the dreadful massacre of the Britons took place, but not till after he had baptized 10,000 Anglis in the river Swale, at the mouth of the Medway, on a Christmas day. Others think this was performed by Paulinus.

The account Fabian gives of the destruction of the Britons and of the monastery of Bangor is confirmed by Humphrey Lloyd, the learned Welch antiquary in his Breviary of Britain. "In Denbighshire (says he) near the castle of Holt, is seen the rubbish and reliques of the monastery of Bangor, while the glory of the Britons flourished: in the same were 2,100 monks very well ordered and learned, divided into seven parts, daily serving God; amongst whom those that were simple and unlearned, by their handy labour, provided meat and drink and apparel for the learned and such as applied themselves to their studies; and if any thing was remaining, they divided it among the poor. That place sent forth many hundred of excellent well learned men; amongst whom it also vomited forth to the world Pelagius. And afterward by the envy and malice of Austin, that arrogant monk, and the most cruel execution of his minister Ethelfrid, those worthy men were destroyed, the whole house from the very foundation, together with the library more precious than gold, was razed down, and demolished by fire and sword: and hence it is manifest, that this bloody massacre of those glorious witnesses for Christ did arise from their Christian courage and zeal against those antichristian impositions of the Romish church."*

* Danvers, p. 336.

Origin of Peter's pence.

It is probable that after this the Romish pontiff obtained the sovereign dominion in ecclesiastical affairs, as we find that INA, one of the kings of the West Saxons, in the seventh century passed a law—"That every family possessed of goods to the value of twenty pence, should pay one penny a year to blessed St. Peter, and the church of Rome. He also prescribed a penalty for deferring the baptism of infants beyond thirty days, and a much greater when any died unbaptized."* This tax continued to be paid for several centuries, and was known by the name of Peter's pence.

From these few, but valuable fragments of the ancient Britons, we discover much of the genuine simplicity of Christianity. Making the scriptures the only rule of their faith and practice, they easily discovered the antichristian spirit of Austin, and the folly of those ceremonies which he strove to introduce. It is not at all wonderful, therefore, that they should refuse to give *christendom to children*, as they could find nothing in the scriptures to countenance such an opinion.

It is proved by Dr. Gill, that infant baptism, for the purpose of taking away original sin, had been enforced by anathemas in the Milevitan council about two centuries before; and it is also known that Gregory the great, who sent Austin into England, had decreed as follows: "Let all *young children* be baptized as they ought to be, according to the tradition of the fathers."†

From this decree being expressed in such general terms, infants not being particularly mentioned, we account for the difficulties which Austin himself had on the subject soon after he came to Britain. Among other interrogatories pro-

* Toulmin's History of Taunton, p. 6. † Fox, vol. i. p. 130.

Decree of Gregory.

posed to Gregory, is the following respecting children; "Lest they should be prevented by death, after how many days ought they to receive baptism?" To which Gregory replied, "If present necessity, arising from fear of death, doth so require, we do not forbid an infant to be baptized the same hour in which it is born." It is hardly conceivable that this question could have been proposed, had the practice of infant baptism been of apostolic origin, or if the English had not made some objections against it. This remark is further corroborated by a circumstance mentioned by Hugo Grotius in his Commentary on Matt. xix. 14. "It is no small evidence (says he) that Infant baptism was not usually practised in the Greek church during many centuries, because not only Constantine the great, the son of Helene, who was a zealous Christian, was not baptized till he was of an advanced age; but that also Gregory Nazianzen, who was the son of a Christian bishop, and brought up for a long time by him, was not baptized till he came to years." If it be admitted that Infant baptism was then unknown in Britain, Constantine's not being baptized in his infancy is easily accounted for: but upon no other principle can we account for this omission of his godly parents, which Fox says they were.

In order to obtain as much light as possible on this very interesting subject, we subjoin the following statement of Dr. Calamy, the celebrated writer on Nonconformity, who in a work entitled, "God's concern for his glory in the British isles," has paid considerable attention to this subject. He relates, from Gildas, 'That Christ shewing his bright light to all the world, afforded his rays, that is, his precepts, in the latter end of the reign of Tiberius Cæsar, when his religion was propagated without any hindrance.' On this

British martyrs.

statement of Gildas, the Doctor remarks, "If he meant this, of the publication of the gospel in Britain, which has been the most prevailing opinion, we must allow him to have had better advantages for knowing this with certainty then, than we have at this distance. According to this account, this island had Christianity preached in it within five years of our Saviour's crucifixion, which was very early, perhaps too early, all circumstances considered, for a place that lay so remote. All ancient writers, however, agree, that Christianity was planted in this land very soon, considering its distance from Judea.

"It is evident, that after Christianity obtained here, a great part of the inhabitants still continued pagans, and yet our holy religion made a progress. As it got ground, the temples of their ancient idols were some of them destroyed, and others of them dedicated to the true and living God. We have no account of such severities here in the primitive times against the followers of a crucified Jesus, as in other countries. That which was the last of the ten persecutions under the Roman emperors, seems to have been the first that affected this island. But in the general calamity, in the reign of Dioclesian and Maximian, about 303, the Christians here were very great sufferers. It is said, that Maximian almost rooted out the Christian religion from Britain, and that they who suffered martyrdom were almost beyond number. Gildas tells us, that their churches were thrown down, and all the books of holy scriptures that could be found, were burnt in the streets; and the chosen priests of the flock of our Lord, together with the innocent sheep, murdered. St. Alban of Verulam, and Julius of Carlisle upon Usk in Monmouthshire, and many others, sealed the truth with their blood.

Cruelties of the Saxons.

“ But when the storm was over, which did not last much above a year, the Christians here, as well as in other parts, fled out of the woods and dens and caves, where they had hid themselves, and rebuilt their demolished churches, and flourished to a great degree, both in peace and unity. They were much favoured by Constantius, the father of Constantine, who continued for the latter part of his life here in Britain, and would suffer no man to die for his religion in his dominions. It was here also that Constantine himself, who was a native of this island, first declared himself a Christian, or inclined that way, which it is not likely he would have publicly done, had not a good part of his army been of that religion; and upon his advancement to the imperial throne, it is not to be wondered at, if more splendour attended Christianity as it was here professed, than had been known before. But I have not, upon the strictest inquiry I have been able to make, hitherto been able to discern sufficient ground to apprehend, that from the beginning, churches or places of worship were so nobly adorned, or church government so modelled in this island, as some time after; or that the prelatical form of government was any part of that glory that was at first declared in this island.

“ Britain (adds the Doctor) was also sadly infested with the Picts and Scots, which after various struggles, when no more help could be had from the Romans, was the occasion of calling in the Saxons to their assistance. These Saxons, whom Gildas calls, ‘A nation odious to God and man,’ came hither to be a scourge to the Britons, about the year of Christ 450. They were at first received as guests, and treated as stipendiaries, in opposition to the barbarians; but at length found themselves strong enough

Cruelties of the Saxons.

to set up for masters, laid the whole country waste, drove the old British Christians into the barren mountains of Wales, and occasioned such confusion and desolation, as Gildas, who wrote a few years after, thought could never be enough lamented. That writer describes their cruelties, and the judgment of heaven upon a sinful people, which they were the instruments of inflicting, in such a manner, as must needs affect all that read his account. He says, 'that all the towns, with the beating of the rams, and all the townsmen, pastors, priests and people, with naked swords that glittered on all sides, and crackling flames, were together whirled to the ground.' And our historians say, that they scarcely left the face of Christianity where they prevailed. And yet pure religion was not even then extirpated from the island.

"Bede, who wrote his history about the year 731, gives us a great deal of light, though allowance must be made for his being himself a Saxon, and not very friendly to the British churches, and for his having a monastic tincture. Christianity, in a new edition of it, with great improvements as to outward pomp, was during this period received from Rome, through the hands of Austin the monk, about the year 598. But there was a purer Christianity in the island before, that was much freer from adulterations and corruptions than that which was now introduced under the same name. There were great contests between those of the old stamp, and those of the new. The former lived in Wales and Scotland, and the latter in the heart of the country. So that there were considerable debates on foot in this island, between Conformists and Nonconformists, in ancient as well as in modern times; and the one sort were apt to carry it with a high hand, and the other forced to be satisfied with the consciousness of their own integrity then as well as now. The

Dispute respecting Baptism.

Conformists then were, in all things, for the methods of the church of Rome ; and the Nonconformists were for the ways and methods of the ancient Christians, and disowned impositions. They were called too, the *Schismatics* of Britain and Ireland ; because they would not receive the Romish alterations, nor submit to the authority by which they were imposed.

“ In the year 601, Austin called a synod, to which the bishops or doctors of the next province of the Britons were summoned, in which the abbot of Bangor gave him a free answer to his demand of conformity to Rome. He told him ‘ that the ancient Christians of this island were obedient and subject to the church of God, and to the pope of Rome, and every godly Christian ; to love every one in his degree, in perfect charity ; and to help every one of them by word and deed, which were the children of God : And other obedience than this he knew not to be due to him whom he called the pope, &c.’ Many of the poor monks, not long after, lost their lives in return for this freedom and resolution.”

Having related the great contest respecting Easter, Dr. Calamy thus proceeds ; “ It ought not to be forgotten that the difference between these old Conformists and Nonconformists did not lie only in the time of keeping Easter : they differed also about baptism. For that was one of the three things which Austin insisted on in his conversation with the British doctors ; that they should for the future administer baptism after the manner of the church of Rome, which is an argument they did not use to do so before.”

Fearing, as it should seem, that this candid statement would make an impression on the minds of his readers, that these ancient British Nonconformists were also Baptists, the doctor proceeds to make some comments upon it.

Dr. Calamy's opinion.

“Wherein the difference,” says he, “between the old Britons and the Romans properly lay about baptism, is not so evident. Pits frankly owns he did not know what it was. Nor does Bede explain it, nor any of our ancient writers that I have conversed with. Some have thought they differed about the *subjects* of baptism; and that whereas the Romans baptized infants, the Britons were against *infant baptism*; and an argument has been drawn from thence by the Anti-pædobaptists. But an answer is returned to it by Dr. Wall, in his *History of infant baptism*, where he says that ‘Pelagius being a native of Britain, his declaring he never heard of any Christian, catholic, or sectary, that denied infant baptism, is a good evidence that his countrymen did not do it.’ It seems more likely that this difference should have been about the *mode* of baptism; and the very words of Austin, as Bede relates the matter, seem to look that way. For he would have them administer baptism, for the future, after *the manner* of the church of Rome. Now I know nothing so remarkable, (continues Dr. Calamy,) in the manner of baptizing in the church of Rome at that time, as the *trine immersion*. That this was customary in that church is asserted by Walafrius Strabo; and though we have no positive evidence that I know of, that a single immersion, or aspersion, or pouring of water, was used among the ancient Britons in their baptism; yet till something else is mentioned, with a surer appearance of probability, I am inclined to believe this was the matter of that part of the difference.”

This interesting statement of Dr. Calamy, and his reflections upon it, require some animadversion.

He acknowledges, that there is no positive evidence that the Britons used single immersion, aspersion, or pouring, in their baptism; but takes it for granted that one of these

Dr. Wall's opinion.

must have been the mode, in order to justify the alteration proposed by Austin. But why does he speak of aspersion, and of pouring? We know from incontrovertible evidence, that they used immersion. Austin baptized in a river; "where," says Mr. Fox, "note by the way, gentle reader, at that time there could be no use of fonts." Immersion, therefore, being the mode then used, it should seem, according to the foregoing hypothesis, that the point at issue between Austin and the Britons was, *whether baptism should be performed by a single or a trine immersion*. This hypothesis, however, is inadmissible, being as improbable as it is unsupported. But let it be admitted that Austin's proposal was *to baptize infants*, after the manner of the church of Rome, instead of baptizing adults on a profession of faith; and then the proposition will, on the one hand, be suitable for the pope's legate to make, as an indispensable requisite to a union with the catholic church, which could not exist without it; and, on the other hand, it will appear to be an absurdity so great, that primitive Christians could not submit to it, without a sacrifice of principle and of conscience, to which even death itself was preferable.

The only objection which Dr. Calamy makes to this is, a partial quotation from Dr. Wall. But if the whole of what the latter says had been stated, it would have appeared that this objection had no weight. The words of Pelagius, as translated by Dr. Wall, are, "That men do slander him, as if he denied the sacrament of baptism to infants, and did promise the kingdom of heaven to any persons without the redemption of Christ, which he had never heard, no not even any impious heretic or sectary say." By these words, it is true, Dr. Wall understands Pelagius to mean, "that he had never heard of any Christian, catholic or sectary, that

Remarks on Calamy and Wall.

denied infant baptism." But does Pelagius mean this? I think not. His meaning seems to have been, that he had never heard, no, not even any impious heretic or sectary say, that the kingdom of heaven could be obtained without the redemption of Christ. The suspicion of his denying infant baptism seems to have arisen from his denying original sin; for the church of Rome had appointed infant baptism, to wash away original sin, and had decreed that without it none could be saved.

This misapprehension of Pelagius by Dr. Wall is the only thing which has been made use of to disprove the opinion of the Baptists, that the ancient British christians were of similar sentiments with themselves.

If Austin's proposal to the British christians was, that they should give christendom to children after the manner of the church of Rome, I should understand it to mean that they should christen children, as the church of Rome did. But the words, "after the manner of the church of Rome," are not in the copy of Fabian at the London institution: the proposition of Austin is there said to have been, that they should give christendom to children. Dr. Wall indeed says that the proposition as he has related it is in a copy of Fabian at Oxford; and he also represents Mr. Wills as saying, that Fabian professes in his preface to have copied it from Bede, though the doctor adds that he had not seen it. There is, however, an internal evidence, that the proposition respected the subjects of baptism, and that the words, "after the manner of the church of Rome," were added by the historian, or by some one of his copiers, and did not constitute a part of the original proposition. For if the original proposition had only respected a mode of baptism, why should any thing have been said concerning the subjects of it? It

Ancient British Christians were Baptists.

had been sufficient to have proposed to give christendom after the manner of the church of Rome, without saying any thing about giving it to children. Whereas if the difference between the church of Rome and the British churches respected the subjects of baptism, and the proposition was that christendom should be given to children, it was natural for the historian to add that this was after the manner of the church of Rome.

To conclude; till something better be offered to disprove our inference from the above-mentioned premises, that these primitive Christians knew nothing of infant baptism, we shall continue to consider them, as being in sentiment and practice, what our opponents call us—*Antipædobaptists*.

CHAP. II.

A. D. 1180—1547.

THE darkness which succeeded the introduction of popery was so prevalent, that, excepting the valleys of Piedmont, which were the residence of the Waldensian churches, it soon spread over the whole of Europe, and rendered invisible every trace of the simplicity of the gospel of Christ.

The Waldensian Christians are celebrated in history for their opposition to the antichristian usurpations of the church of Rome. The learned archbishop Usher, in his book entitled *The succession and state of the Christian Churches*, * traces its succession through them, in distinction from and in

Waldensian Christians.

opposition to the papacy. They underwent the most dreadful persecutions ; and every means which malice and cruelty could invent was used to exterminate them and their principles from the earth. The crusade against them consisted of five hundred thousand men. More than three hundred gentlemen's seats were razed, and many walled towns destroyed.

The persecutions, however, which they suffered were far from accomplishing the design of their enemies. The archbishop says, that "as the persecution about Stephen by that dispersion proved much for the furtherance of the gospel in other parts of the world, so was it here : for those that were not so fit for the war went up and down with more freedom into most parts of Europe. Insomuch that Æneas Sylvius, afterwards Pope Pius ii., confessed, that neither the decrees of popes, nor armies of Christians, could extirpate them."

The archbishop farther informs us, on the authority of Matthew Paris of Westminister, that "the Berengarian or Waldensian heresy had, about the year 1180, generally infected all France, Italy, and England." Guitmond, a popish writer of that time, also says, that "not only the weaker sort in the country villages, but the nobility and gentry in the chief towns and cities, were infected therewith ; and therefore Lanfranc, archbishop of Canterbury, who held this see both in the reigns of William the conqueror and of his son William Rufus, wrote against them in the year 1087." The archbishop adds, from Poplinus's history of France, that "the Waldenses of Aquitain did, about the year 1100, during the reigns of Henry i. and Stephen, kings of England, spread themselves and their doctrines all over Europe," and mentions England in particular.*

* Danvers on baptism, p. 275—278.

Punished in England.

We learn from Fox, on the authority of Robert Guisborne, that in the time of Henry ii., about the year 1158, two eminent Waldensian preachers and barbs, Gerhardus and Dulcinus, came into England to propagate the gospel; and archbishop Usher, from Thomas Walden, says, that "several Waldenses that came out of France were apprehended, and by the king's command were marked in the forehead with a key or hot iron." "Which sect, (says William of Newbury, in his history of England,) were called the Publicani, whose original was from Gascoyne; and who, being as numerous as the sand of the sea, did sorely infest both France, Italy, Spain, and England."

Rapin, in relating the transactions of the councils of Henry ii., gives the following account of these people, on the authority of the above-mentioned historian.—"Henry ordered a council to meet at Oxford in 1166, to examine the tenets of certain heretics, called Publicani. Very probably they were disciples of the Waldenses, who began then to appear. When they were asked in the council, who they were; they answered, they were Christians, and followers of the apostles. After that, being questioned upon the creed, their replies were very orthodox as to the trinity and incarnation. But, (adds Rapin,) if the historian is to be depended on, they rejected baptism, the eucharist, marriage, and the communion of saints. They shewed a great deal of modesty and meekness in their whole behaviour. When they were threatened with death, in order to oblige them to renounce their tenets, they only said, *Blessed are they that suffer for righteousness sake.*" *

There is no difficulty in understanding what were their sentiments on these heretical points. When a monk says they

* History of England, vol. i. p. 350.

Waldenses in Bohemia.

rejected the eucharist, it is to be understood that they rejected the absurd doctrine of transubstantiation; when he says that they rejected marriage, he means that they denied it to be a sacrament, and maintained it to be a civil institution; when he says that they rejected the communion of saints, nothing more is to be understood than that they refused to hold communion with the corrupt church of Rome; and when he says that they rejected baptism, what are we to understand but that they rejected the baptism of infants? These were the errors for which they were branded with a hot iron in their foreheads, by those who had "the mark of the beast, both in their foreheads and in their hands."

Paul Stransky, *de Republicâ Bohemorum*, p. 272, (as quoted by David Cranz in his *History of the United Brethren*, translated by La Trobe, p. 16,) says, "the Waldenses, in 1176, arrived in Bohemia, and settled at Satz and Laun on the river Eger. These joined those Bohemians, who were still tenacious of the rites of the Greek church. They showed them the defects of their religious exercises; and introduced among them a purer knowledge of the doctrines of the Christian faith, according to the word of God. By this means the upright were confirmed in the faith, and such as were fallen asleep, again awakened."

"These ancient Christians," says Cranz, after having made the above quotation, "(who, besides the several names of reproach given them, were at length denominated *Waldenses*, from one of their most eminent teachers PETER WALDUS who is said to have emigrated with the rest from France into Bohemia, and there to have died) date their origin from the beginning of the fourth century; when one Leo, at the great revolution in religion under *Constantine the Great*, opposed the innovations of Sylvester, bishop of Rome,

Antiquity of the Waldenses.

Nay, *Rieger* goes farther still, taking them for the remains of the people of the Vallies, who, when the apostle Paul, as is said, made a journey over the Alps into Spain, were converted to Christ.

“The testimony of their enemies themselves (continues *Cranz*) seems to corroborate this conjecture.

“*Sancho Reinerus*, an apostate, and persecutor of the Waldenses in the thirteenth century, writes, ‘Amongst all sects, none is more pernicious than that of the *Poor of Lyons* (which is another denomination of the Waldenses) for three reasons: 1. Because it is the most ancient. Some aver their existence from the days of Sylvester; others, from the very time of the Apostles. 2. Because it is so universal; for there is hardly a country into which this sect has not crept. 3. Because all others render themselves detestable by their blasphemies; but this has a great appearance of godliness, they living a righteous life before men, believing right concerning God, confessing all the articles of the creed, only hating the pope of Rome, &c.’

—“This, (says *Cranz*) continued above two hundred years, till 1391, when, being discovered through the imprudence of two of their preachers, they were cruelly persecuted, and, for the most part, dispersed abroad in the adjacent countries. Yet many witnesses of the truth remained in Bohemia; who, not only in private, but in the churches and schools, and in the very court-chapel at Prague, testified against the corruption in doctrine and practice, which now broke in more and more like a torrent; to which they were farther greatly encouraged by the writings of Wickliffe, brought from England by the young noblesse who studied there.”

Roger de Hovedon, in his Annals, says, that in the year 1182, “Henry ii. was very favourable to the Waldensian sect

Origin of the English Lollards.

in England; for whereas they burnt them in many places of Flanders, Italy, and France, in great numbers, he would not suffer any such thing here; and being in his own and his queen's right possessed of Aquitain, Poictou, Guien, Gascoyne, Normandy, &c. the principal places inhabited by the Waldenses and Albigenses, and they being his subjects, they had free egress into his territories here."

During the reigns of Richard i. and king John, which were times of great trouble, we read of no opposition made against them. Richard was long absent in the holy war. John had great contests with the pope, who laid his kingdom under an interdict, and forbad all public worship for the space of six years, only admitting of private baptism to infants. This, with the opposition made to him by the barons, found him so much employment, that these Christians had no molestation, but had great opportunities for disseminating their principles; while the king by his arms defended the Waldenses and Albigenses in Aquitain and Gascoyne, who were so much oppressed by the crusading army of the pope.

In the reign of Henry iii., archbishop Usher says, from Matthew Paris, "the orders of the Friars Minorites came into England to suppress this Waldensian heresy." And in the reign of Edward iii., about the year 1315, Fuller informs us, in his ecclesiastical history, that "Walter Lollard, that German preacher, or, (as Peter Perin calls him in his history of the Waldenses,) one of their barbs, came into England, a man in great renown among them; and who was so eminent in England that, as in France they were called Berengarians from Berengarius, and Petrobrusians from Peter Bruis, and in Italy and Flanders, Arnoldists, from the famous Arnold of Brescia; so did the Waldensian Christians for many generations after bear the name of this worthy man, being called Lollards."

Sentiments of the Waldenses

As this is an historical fact of great importance for discovering the origin of those sentiments which at length produced a reformation in the kingdom, and an emancipation from the church of Rome, it is very desirable to ascertain the opinion of these zealous Christians on the question of infant baptism, since it will furnish us with a clue by which to judge of the principles of those who were afterwards such eminent asserters of Christian liberty.

If the reader will turn to what is said by Dr. Gill on this subject, in the extracts prefixed to this work, he will find the opinion of William of Newbury (as recited by Rapin) confirmed, respecting their denial of baptism; that is, of infant baptism.

In addition to these proofs may be mentioned what is said by Chessanion, in his *History of the Albigenses*, who (he says) were of the same sentiments. "Some writers, (says he,) affirm that the Albigenses approved not the baptism of infants; others that they entirely slighted this holy sacrament, as if it were of no use either to great or small. The same may be said of the Waldenses, though some affirm that they have always baptized their children. This difference of authors kept me some time in suspense before I could come to be resolved on which side the truth lay. At last considering what St. Bernard saith of this matter in his sixty-sixth homily on the second chapter of the Song of Songs, and the reasons he brings to refute this error, and also what he wrote *ad Hildefonsum Comitem sancti Ægidii*, I cannot deny but the Albigenses for the greatest part were of this opinion. And that which confirms me yet more in this belief is, that in the history of the city of Treves there were some who denied that the sacrament of baptism was available to the salvation of infants; and one Catherine Saube, who was burnt at

respecting infant baptism.

Montpelier, in the year 1417, for being of the mind of the Albigenses in not believing the traditions of the Romish church, was of the same mind respecting infant baptism; as it is recorded in the register of the town-house of the said city of Montpelier, of which we shall speak at the end of the fourth book. The truth is, (continues Chessanion) they did not reject the sacrament, and say it was useless, but only counted it unnecessary to infants, because they are not of age to believe, nor capable of giving evidence of their faith. That which induced them, as I suppose, to entertain this opinion is, what our Lord says, *He that believeth, and is baptized, shall be saved, and he that believeth not, shall be damned.*"*

This statement is in part at least corroborated by Dr. Wall in his *History of infant baptism*; and, as he was desirous of establishing the contrary opinion, his concessions in our favour are certainly of weight. Speaking of the Petrobrussians, whom he calls a sect of the Waldenses, he says, "withdrawing themselves, about the year 1100, from the communion of the church of Rome, which was then very corrupt, they did reckon Infant Baptism as one of the corruptions, and accordingly renounced it, and practised only adult baptism. Part II. Chap. 7. §. 5, 6, 7."†

Mosheim, in his *Ecclesiastical History*, speaking of Peter de Bruis, who was a celebrated itinerant preacher, and who was burnt to death by an enraged populace at St. Giles's, in the year 1150, says, "It is certain that one of his tenets was, *that no persons whatever were to be baptized before they were come to the full use of reason.*"‡

* Stennett's Answer to Russen, pp. 79, 184. † Part ii. Chap. 10. p. 527.

‡ Vol. iii. p. 116.

Testimony of Brandt.

The testimony of Mr. Brandt respecting the antiquity of these churches and of their sentiments respecting baptism is of importance to our argument. He says that "the errors and crafty inventions of popery, had never been able to find a passage to those people ; since being shut up in their valleys, separate from the rest of the world, and conversing chiefly among themselves, they had retained a great deal of the simplicity and purity of the *Apostolical doctrine*. That this antiquity of the doctrine of the Waldenses, is acknowledged even by their greatest enemies.—Some of them likewise rejected infant baptism."*

To corroborate this last clause many things are produced by Dr. Allix in his remarks on the ancient churches of Piedmont. "The followers of Gundulphus in Italy were many of them examined by Gerhard bishop of Cambray and Arras upon several heads in the year 1025. It seems as if these people were surfeited with the vicious and debauched lives of the Romish Clergy, and did rather chuse to go without any baptism, rather than have it administered by such lewd hands, or that they had agreed to have it performed privately in their own way. Let things have been as it would it is plain they were utterly against infant-baptism," The citation, in part of their answer, as taken by Dr. Allix out of Gerhard's preface to Reginaldus, is this, "But if any shall say, that some sacrament lies hid in baptism, the force of that is taken off by these three causes ; the first is, because the reprobate life of ministers can afford no saving remedy to the persons to be baptized. The second, because whatsoever sins are renounced at the font, are afterwards taken up again in life and practice. The third, because a strange faith, and a strange confession do not seem to belong to, or be of any

* Brandt's Hist. Ref. vol. i, Book I, p. 12.

Testimony of Dr. Allix.

advantage to a *little child*, who neither *wills* nor *runs*, who knows *nothing of faith*, and is altogether ignorant of his own good and salvation, in whom there can be no desire of regeneration, and from whom *no confession of faith can be expected.*"

The doctor adds the following quotation from an Inquisitor. "They condemn the sacraments of the church because of the undue and irreverent manner wherein they are celebrated by the priests, and because they set them to sale, as also, because of the wicked and scandalous lives of many ministers." In the next paragraph the same Inquisitor lets us know the ground of this error (as he calls it) about infant-baptism. "Some of them are in an error concerning baptism, holding that infants cannot be saved by it, Mark xvi. 16. whosoever shall believe, and be baptized shall be saved. But an infant does not believe, therefore is not saved."

In a little time after this lived the noted Anoldus Brixienis, a follower Berengarius, who eminently opposed the Romish corruptions. And amongst some notions imputed to him, it is observed, "There was yet a more heinous thing laid to his charge, which was this; that he was unsound in his judgment about the sacrament of the altar and infant-baptism."*

This excellent man was condemned, hanged, and his body burnt at Rome, and the ashes cast into the Tiber. But there is a letter of *Everinus* to St. Bernard a little before the year 1146, wherein he speaks clearly of a sect which approved of *adult-baptism upon believing*, and strenuously opposed *infant-baptism*. The words of the letter are, "They make void the priesthood of the church and condemn the sacraments besides *baptism* only, and this only in those who were come to *age*, who they say are baptized by Christ himself,

* Dr. Allix, p. 223, 123, 171, 172.

Eminent British Reformers.

whosoever be the ministers of the sacraments. They do not believe *infant baptism*, alledging that place of the gospel, whosoever shall believe and be baptized, shall be saved.”*

The same learned gentleman gives us an extract taken by Claudius Caissord in the year 1548, out of an old MS. of Rainerius a fryer, wrote by him 296 years before, against the Waldenses wherein he has these words, “They say, that when first a man is baptized then he is received into this *sect*. Some of them hold, that baptism is of no advantage to infants, because they cannot actually believe.”†

There seems to me to be reason to believe that the Lollards in England were of similar sentiments on this subject. Walter Lollard from whom they sprung, was a Waldensian barb; and I have never seen any satisfactory proof that infant baptism was practised among these Christians at this early period of their history. These, it is likely, were the first public opposers of the corruptions of the church of Rome in England, after the fatal massacre of the ancient British Christians under the direction of the pope’s legate, Austin, who has been flattered with the epithet of the English Apostle, and canonized as a Saint by the church of Rome.

But to return to the Britons. It might be presumed that some of their descendants, either in Wales, or upon the borders of it, that is to say, in Herefordshire and the adjoining counties, would for some ages maintain the same principles with themselves. This presumption accords with fact; for the most early and most eminent Christians in England, after the conquest, are said to have been born in this part of the island. These were Bradwardine, Brute, Sir John Oldcastle, Tyndal, Penry, and others, whose histories we shall

* Dr. Allix, p. 143, 145, 147.

† Ibid p. 188, 191.

Dr. Bradwardine.

briefly relate in the course of our work. For this information we are indebted to *A History of the Welsh Baptists*, published by Mr. Joshua Thomas of Leominster, from which we shall extract many interesting particulars on this subject.

In this account of the Baptist church of *Olchon*, and *Chapel-y-ffin*, Mr. Thomas says, “*Olchon* is a deep narrow valley, under the black mountain, in the parish of *Cludock*, and properly in *Herefordshire*; yet on the borders of the three counties of *Hereford*, *Monmouth*, and *Brecknock*; and likewise on the borders of the three dioceses of *Hereford*, *Llandaff*, and *St. David's*. The inhabitants of that and most of the adjoining parishes were *Cambro-britons*, or properly *Cymry*, vulgarly called *Welsh* or *Welch*, till of late years; and even now, many in those parts talk the *British* language, and most of the natives understand it. The ministry of the Baptists now there is in that language.

“ I am inclined to believe (continues Mr. Thomas) that through all the darkness of popery, there were individuals here and there among the ancient Britons, who had saving knowledge of Christ; though they had not sufficient courage to appear publicly against the growing corruptions of the *Romish* church. It is my opinion that the first open struggle of *Protestant* light against *Popish* darkness, among our countrymen, began at or near *Olchon*; and that long before the appellation of *Protestant* was known even in *Germany*. My conjectures spring from the following particulars,—

“ *Dr. Thomas Bradwardine* was chosen *Archbishop* of *Canterbury*: he was a very learned and celebrated person in the former part of the fourteenth century. *Dr. Fuller* in his *Church History*, book iii. p. 98, says, that this worthy man was born at *Bradwardine*, and appears to have had his name from that place, as in former centuries it was very common

Dr. Bradwardine

for persons to take their names from the place of their birth, occupation, or habitation. Bradwardine is the name of a parish in Herefordshire, a few miles from Olchon. The word carries in it an internal evidence of its British original; but I will not pretend to guess to what particular circumstance it owed its origin. Bishop Godwin, contrary to Fuller, says that Dr. Bradwardine was born at Hartfield in Sussex. But before the latter had written his account of the worthies of England, he had received better information, for he there says that Camden, Bale, Pits, and Godwin, all differed respecting the place of Bradwardine's birth. These differences he endeavours to reconcile by saying that there was an ancient family at Bradwardine in Herefordshire, which removed thence, and had settled for three generations in Sussex, near Chichester; and that the above Thomas was born in or near that city. Hence he names him among his worthies of Herefordshire and of Sussex. He names a Thomas Bradwardine among the gentry of Herefordshire in 1433; so that it seems there were some of the family then at Bradwardine. Dr. Bradwardine was very famous for his profound and extensive erudition, and genuine piety. His common title was *Doctor Profundus*, the profound Doctor. Of all his writings, that which he wrote against the Pelagians is the most celebrated. Its title is, *De causâ Dei, Of the cause of God*. Dr. Gill, in his *Cause of God and truth*, refers to Bradwardine more than once, and calls him a *second Austin*. This commendation is great; but he did not make a formal opposition to popery as such. Though he was much abroad, yet possibly he might be of some service to his distant relations about Bradwardine and towards Olchon, by writing or otherwise. How far he was useful that way we know not. He died about 1348 or 9." Rapin, speaking of this eminent

Wickliffe.

person, says, that “ what rendered him still more esteemed for his learning was his humility, and his zeal to instruct the people committed to his care.”

“ Very probably (continues Mr. Thomas) the famous Wickliffe received much of his light in the gospel from Bradwardine. When the latter died, he was succeeded in the see of Canterbury by Dr. Simon Islip, in 1349. Islip had so great a regard for Wickliffe, that he made him rector of Canterbury College then at Oxford. The rector preached and kept his place with great reputation till 1366, when Archbishop Islip died. Then Wickliffe was turned out of his rectory. After that he openly opposed popery, and had powerful friends to defend him against all the rage of the pope and clergy.”—Thus far Mr. Thomas.

It is very probable that Bradwardine, Islip, and Wickliffe, received their sentiments from the followers of Lollard; and that on this account the followers of Wickliffe are indiscriminately denominated *Wickliffites* and *Lollards*. Bishop Newton, having mentioned the Lollards, says, “ There was a man more worthy to have given name to the sect, the deservedly famous John Wickliffe, the honour of his own and the admiration of all succeeding times.”

This extraordinary man, who has been justly called the morning star of the Reformation, began to be famous about the year 1361; and though he was greatly persecuted by several popes, and by the clergy in England, yet the providence of God so protected him from their malice, that he died peaceably at his own house at Lutterworth, Dec. 31, 1384. By the command of the pope his bones were taken out of the grave and burnt, and his ashes cast into a brook adjoining, called the Swift, in 1428.

Followers of Wickliffe.

The doctrines of Wickliffe spread very wonderfully through the land, if the testimony of Knyhton, a contemporary historian, who appears to have been his inveterate enemy may be believed. "Such (says he) was the success of his teaching, preaching, and writings, that more than half the people of England became his followers, and embraced his doctrines." Their character is thus given by Reinhar, a popish writer. "The disciples of Wickliffe are men of a serious modest deportment, avoiding all ostentation in dress, mixing little with the busy world, and complaining of the debauchery of mankind. They maintain themselves wholly by their own labour, and despise wealth, being fully content with bare necessities. They are chaste and temperate; are never seen in taverns, or amused with the trifling gaieties of life; yet you find them always employed, either in learning or teaching. They are concise and devout in their prayers, blaming an unanimated prolixity. They never swear; speak little; and in their public preaching lay the principal stress on charity."

It was not long after the death of Wickliffe, that his disciples began to form distinct societies. Rapin says, that "in the year 1389, the Wickliffites or Lollards began to separate from the church of Rome, and appoint priests from amongst themselves to perform divine service after their way. Though some were from time to time persecuted by the bishops, yet these persecutions were not rigorous. Their aim seemed to be only to hinder them from pleading prescription. Besides, a petition presented to the king by a former parliament to revoke the power granted the bishops to imprison hereticks restrained the most forward."*

It is probable that the liberty granted to these early dissenters from the church of England, as then established,

* History of England, vol. i. p. 480.

Sufferings of the Lollards.

depended in a great measure on the disposition of the monarch, and on his ability to check the cruel dispositions of the pope and the clergy. It appears evident from the history of the English church, that whenever the clergy have been left to follow their own inclinations, they have used their crosier, not in defending the flock, but in giving the followers of Christ cause to say, "For thy sake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter."

The sufferings of these people from this period till the Reformation were very great. The Lollards' tower still stands as a monument of their miseries, and of the cruelty of their implacable enemies. This tower is at Lambeth palace, and was fitted up for this purpose by Chicheley, Archbishop of Canterbury, who came to this see in 1414. It is said that he expended two hundred and eighty pounds to make this prison for the Lollards. The vast staples and rings to which they were fastened, before they were brought out to the stake, are still to be seen in a large lumber-room at the top of the palace, and ought to make protestants look back with gratitude upon the hour which terminated so bloody a period.

That the sentiments of Wickliffe and his followers were opposed to infant baptism, may be ascertained from several sources of information. It is well known that after the death of the pious queen Anne, wife of Richard II., and sister of Wenceslaus, king of Bohemia, the books of Wickliffe were carried into Bohemia by her attendants, as they also were about the same time by Jerom of Prague, and other persons, in consequence whereof his sentiments spread in that country, where lived the celebrated John Huss, who, together with Jerom of Prague, fell a martyr to the fury of the papists at Constance, about a hundred years before the

Lollards oppose infant baptism.

time of Luther. A letter describing the sentiments of the Hussites, written from Bohemia to Erasmus, dated Oct. 10, 1519, states as follows. "They renounce all the rites and ceremonies of our church;—they ridicule our doctrine and practices in both sacraments;—they deny orders (the hierarchy) and elect officers from among the laity;—they receive no other rule than the bible;—they admit none into their communion till they be dipped in water, or baptized;—and they reckon one another without distinction of rank to be called brothers and sisters."* If this was the case with respect to the followers of Wickliffe in Bohemia, what should hinder us from believing that the followers of Wickliffe in England held similar sentiments respecting the discipline of the church of Christ, and that they also maintained that none ought to be admitted into their communion until they were dipped in water, or baptized?

That this was the case appears from the laws made against them in the reign of Henry IV.; for among the articles by which the inquisitors were to examine them, one was, "WHETHER AN INFANT DYING UNBAPTIZED CAN BE SAVED?" This the Lollards constantly asserted in opposition to the church of Rome, which decreed that *no infant could be saved without it*. Fox says, that one of the errors they were charged with was, "that they spoke against the opinion of such as think children are damned who depart before baptism, and that Christian people be sufficiently baptized in the blood of Christ, and need no water; and that infants be sufficiently baptized, if their parents are baptized before them."†—Fox thinks they were slandered in this matter because says he, "It is so contrary to the manifest word that

* Colomesius's Collection of Letters to men of note.

† Fox's Acts and Mon. vol. i. p. 752.

First English Martyr.

it is not thought any to be so ignorant of the gospel that ever did or would affirm the same." But that these people opposed the baptism of infants, is corroborated by the *Dutch Martyrology, or bloody Theatre*, which says from Walsingham, "that one Sir Lewis Clifford, who had been a friend of Wickliffe, did discover to the Archbishop of Canterbury, that *the Lollards would not baptize their new-born children.*"*

Fox says, that it was upon these charges, that in the space of four years, one hundred and twenty Lollards, men and women, were apprehended; and suffered greatly. And though some upon trial recanted; yet William White, Father Abraham of Colchester, and John Waden, were burned at Norwich, Sep. 18, 1428; and in the reign of Henry VII. eight others, whose names he mentions, were burned at the same place.

The person who had the honour of leading this bloody way was William Sawtry, parish priest of St. Osith in London. From what has been stated, it seems highly probable that the protomartyr of the English nation was a Baptist, as also the martyred Lollards in general. The proofs there are to confirm this opinion have led a writer in Rees's Edition of Chambers's Cyclopædia to say, that "there were several among the Lollards and Wickliffites who denied infant baptism."

Respecting Wickliffe's sentiments on this subject, many writers have positively asserted that he opposed this practice. Dr. Hurd in his *History of all Religions* says, "It is pretty clear from the writings of many learned men, that Dr. John Wickliffe, the first English reformer, either considered infant baptism unlawful, or at best not necessary." The author of a *History of Religion*, published in London in 1764, in four

* Danver's Treatise of Baptism p. 2, 303.

Wickliffe opposed infant baptism.

volumes octavo, says, "It is clear from many authors that Wickliffe rejected infant baptism, and that on this doctrine his followers agreed with the modern Baptists." Thomas Walden and Joseph Vicecomes, who had access to his writings, have charged him with denying pædobaptism, and they brought their charge at a time when it might have been easily contradicted, if it had not been true. The first of these charges him with holding the following opinions about baptism. "That baptism doth not confer, but only signifies grace which was given before; that those are fools and presumptuous who affirm such infants not to be saved as die without baptism; also that he denied that all sins are abolished in baptism, and asserted that the baptism of water profited not without the baptism of the Spirit."*

Walsingham says, "It was in the year 1381, that that damnable heretic, John Wickliffe, reassumed the cursed opinions of Berengarius;" of which it is certain that denying infant baptism was one. He also says "that his followers did deny baptism to infants, because they concluded them, as they were the children of believers, to be holy, and not to stand in need of baptism to take away original sin." Thomas Walden, before mentioned, calls Wickliffe "one of the seven heads that came out of the bottomless pitt, for denying infant baptism, that heresie of the Lollards, of whom he was so great a ringleader."†

A council was held at Blackfriars, June 11, 1382, to condemn Wickliffe and his sect; at which time, while his enemies were in convocation, that terrible earthquake happened which is mentioned in the chronicles of St. Alban's, and of which Wickliffe also takes notice in his writings. This greatly alarmed his persecutors, but did not prevent

* Walden, tom. ii. c. 98, 108.

† Danver's Treatise, p. 2, 287.

Followers of Wickliffe.

their framing many articles of accusation. The eleventh article was, *that the children of believers might be saved without baptism.*

A denial that baptism had virtue in itself to procure the salvation of the infant, and that the want of it would insure damnation, was rudely shaking the foundation on which infant baptism was then built. He is accused, however, of going still farther, and of asserting, "that none were members of the church visible who did not appear to be members of the church invisible; and that none had a right to church membership who did not make a public profession, and profess obedience to Christ. It is unnecessary to add, that infants, being unable to make this public profession, would not be considered by him as members of the visible church, or as possessing a right to participate of any of its ordinances.

Having mentioned some of the followers of Wickliffe, it seems desirable that we should more particularly notice a few of them, as persons who by English protestants ought to be had in everlasting remembrance.

In the history of Welsh Baptists already mentioned, there is an account of one of these named *Walter Brute*. Mr. Thomas says, "I suppose he lived in or near Olchon," and mentions several reasons which make this appear probable. "It is recorded (says he) that he was a gentleman of rank, learning, and parts, though reckoned a layman by the popish clergy. Trevnant or rather Trefnant, bishop of Hereford, charges Mr. Brute with seducing the people as much as he could from day to day, and with teaching openly and privately as well the nobles as the commons. Mr. William Swinderby, and Mr. Stephen Ball, were preachers of note

William Brute.

then, intimate friends of Brute, and all of Wickliffe's doctrine.

“ By a copy of a commission of Richard ii. about 1392, it appears that Mr. Swinderby and his friends had fled into Wales, out of the diocese of Hereford. It is very probable that they had retired among the mountains about Olchon and Chapel-y-ffin, and that they there instructed our countrymen as they had opportunity, where they could soon be out of the county and diocese of Hereford. So many counties and dioceses meeting on those hills, gave some help in the time of persecution. They could shift from one county and diocese to another, as they saw occasion; so finding shelter in those deep vallies, and on those lofty hills, and craggy rocks.

“ Mr. Fox, in his martyrology, has given us a large account of Mr. Brute and his religious sentiments, taken from the register of the bishop of Hereford. Our countrymen did confute popish errors in many articles, and reformed much concerning baptism. He held that *faith should precede baptism*, and that baptism was not essential to salvation; yet still admitted that the faith of godly parents was sufficient for their infants. Mr. Thomas Davye, however in his treatise on baptism, says, Mr. Fox indeed, speaking of the opinion of W. Brute, as to the sacrament of baptism and of infants dying without it, seems to extenuate the matter, because he himself was for infant baptism! Mr. Davye further says, that Swinderby was one of Brute's followers, and supposes that Mr. Brute was more a Baptist than was represented by Mr. Fox.

“ Our worthy countryman, Mr. C. Edwards (adds Mr. Thomas) entitles Mr. Brute *Cymro godidog*; that is, an

William Brute.

excellent Cambro Briton, a learned layman of the diocese of Hereford; and says that he instructed his countrymen and admonished them, explaining the scriptures, and showing the difference between true religion and popish foppery exorcisms, and such things.

“ Richard ii. directed a letter to the nobility and gentry of the county of Hereford, and to the mayor of the city. Among the gentlemen then named, Thomas Oldcastle is one. The letter charges all to persecute W. Brute, charged with preaching heresy in the diocese and places adjacent, and also with keeping conventicles. It seems from this, that Brute, Swinderby, and others, preached in different places on the borders of Wales; and Mr. Fox has recorded, out of the register, that they preached at Whitney and Leinwardine in Herefordshire.

“ Mr. Brute was a reputable writer. Mr. Fox has mentioned his works on several subjects of divinity, in his *Acts and Monuments*. We are also told that Fox set forth the works of Tyndal, Frith, and Barnes, in 1573; and that it was wished the same diligence had been used in searching after and collecting the works of Wickliffe, Brute, and others. These wrote near a hundred years before printing began in England.

“ There is no certain account that I can find (continues Mr. Thomas) where, how, nor when Mr. Brute died, whether he suffered martyrdom or not. But we may look upon him as the first public reformer among our countrymen. On his trial, as recorded by Fox, he declared that he was a Briton by father and mother, and rejoiced that he was a descendant from the ancient Britons, who had been so valiant for the truth and against popery, in former times. The last account Fox gives of him is in 1393. In the work of Mr.

Sir John Oldcastle.

Davye, above referred to, it is said, that Mr. Swinderby, the friend of Brute, was burnt alive for his profession in Smithfield, in 1401."

Another reason assigned by Mr. Thomas, for concluding that Brute and his friends preached in and about Olchon is, that Sir John Oldcastle, who was so zealous for Wickliffe's doctrine, was a native, and resident of this part of the country. "His birth-place and patrimony (says he) bear his name to this day. Oldcastle is a small parish adjoining to Cludock in Monmouthshire. The valiant king Henry v. was also born at Monmouth; and having a great regard for his countryman, introduced him into his household. Sir John Oldcastle married Lord Cobham's daughter, and at his father-in-law's death was created Lord Cobham. The noble Briton though in the king's court, was full of zeal against popery, and was reckoned the chief man through the kingdom in supporting, defending, and encouraging the Lollards, who were the Protestants and Dissenters of these times. For these things the popish clergy were full of bitterness and rage against him, as they knew very well that he was much in favour at court. However, after many consultations, they found means, like Daniel's enemies, to prevail with the king to have him apprehended and brought to trial as an enemy to Holy Church."

It is said of this excellent nobleman, that it was publicly known that he had been at great expense in collecting and transcribing the works of Wickliffe, which he dispersed among the common people without any reserve. It was publicly known also that he maintained a great number of the disciples of Wickliffe as itinerant preachers in many parts of the country, particularly in the dioceses of Canterbury, Rochester, and Hereford.

He is persecuted by the Clergy.

When the archbishop, at the head of a large body of the dignified clergy, waited on the king, he laid before him with as much acrimony as decency would admit, the offence of his servant Lord Cobham, and begged his majesty would suffer them, for Christ's sake, to put him to death. The king told the archbishop that he had ever been averse to shedding of blood in the cause of religion: such violence he thought more destructive of truth than of error. He therefore enjoined the convocation to postpone the affair a few days; in which time he would himself reason with Lord Cobham, whose behaviour he by no means approved; and if this were ineffectual, he would then leave him to the censure of the church.

With this answer the primate was satisfied; and the king sending for Lord Cobham, endeavoured by all the arguments in his power to set before him the high offence of separating from the church, and pathetically exhorted him to retract his error. Lord Cobham's answer is upon record. "I ever was (said he) a dutiful subject to your majesty, and I hope ever shall be. Next to God, I profess obedience to my king. But as for the spiritual dominion of the pope, I never could see on what foundation it is claimed, nor can I pay him any obedience. As sure as God's word is true, to me it appears fully evident that he is the great antichrist foretold in holy writ."

This answer of Lord Cobham so exceedingly shocked the king, that, turning away in visible displeasure, he from that time withdrew from him every mark of his favour. Deserted by the king, the archbishop soon found means to get him committed to the tower; and on Sep. 23, 1413. he was cited to appear before the consistory; but not appearing, he was declared contumacious, and excommunicated without

He suffers martyrdom.

further ceremony. But though committed to the tower, and condemned to die, yet by some means he made his escape; and taking advantage of a dark night he eluded pursuit, and arrived safe in Wales, where he found an asylum, and was secured by some of the chiefs of that country from the rage of his enemies.

It is supposed that all this was under the connivance, and with the approbation of the King, who was not willing to put him to death, "We are told (says Mr. Thomas) by a Monmouthshire author, that Sir John lay concealed among his tenants and friends at or about Oldcastle, above four years; till at last, Lord Powys, a covetous and bigotted papist, for a considerable sum of money, apprehended him."

He was then taken to London; and, the King being at that time out of the Kingdom, the Romish clergy made all speed to dispatch him by a most inhuman death. He was hanged up by an iron chain round the waist, and burnt, or rather roasted, to death, over a slow fire.

The translator of Rapin says in a note, "As this was the first noble blood that was shed in England by popish cruelty, so perhaps none ever suffered a more cruel martyrdom." The historian says, "Thus died Sir John Oldcastle, baron of Cobham, with wonderful constancy, perfectly answerable to the firmness wherewith he had all along maintained the doctrine of Wickliffe which he professed." There is a painting of this wonderful man preserved in Dr. Williams's library, in Red Cross street, London.

"This nobleman (says Mr. Thomas) was another instructor of the good people in and about Olchon. In the four years which he spent amongst them, it may be concluded that he did all the service he could to promote the truth for

Sentiments of Lord Cobham.

which he suffered." His martyrdom was in 1417, two years after that of the celebrated John Huss, who likewise was a worthy disciple of Wickliffe, and a hundred years before Luther began the reformation in Germany.

From some things contained in the confession of faith which Lord Cobham presented to the King, it is evident that he had fully imbibed the sentiment of Wickliffe, "that all traditions not taught in the scripture are superfluous and wicked." This confession he thus concluded: "Finally, my faith is, that God will ask no more of a christian in this life than to obey the precepts of his blessed law. If any prelate of the church requires more or any other kind of obedience, he contemneth Christ, exalteth himself above God, and is plainly antichrist."

Thus did Lord Cobham and his friends appear on the side of Christ, when "all the world wondered after the beast;" and when England was immersed in error, they heroically defended the truth. These were *Dissenters* long before the church of England, in its present form, was by law established. These shone as morning stars in our hemisphere, before the day of the Reformation. These were they who followed the Redeemer whithersoever he went; who overcame all their enemies through the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony; and who loved not their lives unto the death!

It is to be lamented that we have not a particular account of the afflictions which the Lollards in general suffered at this time; yet it is not to be doubted that the hand of persecution fell with superior weight on the lower order of people, when even nobility was not a preservative from the rage of the clergy. There is a remark in Robinson's dissertation on public preaching, prefixed to Claude's Essay, which refers

King Henry viii.

to a period forty years after this, and proves that the demon of persecution was at that time neither dead nor chained. "I have (says he) before me a manuscript register of Gray, bishop of Ely, which proves that in the year 1457, there was a congregation of this sort in this village, Chesterton, where I live, who privately assembled for divine worship, and had preachers of their own who taught them the very doctrines we now preach. Six of them were accused of heresy before the tyrant of the district, and condemned to abjure heresy, and to do penance half naked, in the public market-places of Ely, and Cambridge, and in the church-yard of Great Swaffham. It was pity the poor souls were forced to abjure the twelfth article of their accusation, in which they were said to have affirmed, *All priests and people in orders are incarnate devils.*"

During the reign of Henry viii, some alterations were made in the constitution of the church. In the year 1536, the articles were published, commonly called King Henry's Creed, and entitled, "Articles devised by the Kynges Highnes Majestie to stablyshe christen quietnes and unitie among us, and to avoyde contentious opinions, which articles he also approved by the consent and determination of the whole clergie of the realme." "In the translation whereof (says Fox) he altereth nothing from the old trade, heretofore received from Rome."

What is said about baptism is truly papistical, and evidently points at some who opposed infant baptism. "Item, That infants must needs be christened because they be born in original sin, which sin must needs be remitted, which cannot be done but by the sacrament of baptism, whereby they receive the Holy Ghost, which exerciseth his grace and efficacy in them, and cleanseth and purifieth them from sin

Proceedings against the Baptists.

by his most secret virtue and operation. Item, that children or men once baptized, can nor ought to be baptized again. Item, That they ought to repute and take all the Anabaptists' and the Pelagians' opinions contrary to the premises, and every other man's opinions on this behalf, for detestable heresies, and to be utterly condemned."*

The second article runs after this manner. "That baptism was a sacrament instituted by Christ; that it was necessary to salvation; and that infants were to be baptized for the pardon of original sin."

In the next year we find a proclamation issued against heresies and heretics, which recites, "That of late many strangers born out of this land are arrived and come into this realm, which albeit they were baptized in their infancy or childhood, according to the universal church of Christ; yet notwithstanding, in contempt of the holy sacrament of baptism so given and received, they have of their own presumption lately rebaptized themselves."†

From these articles and proclamations it is easy to discern, that there were many persons in the kingdom who, objecting to infant baptism, were baptized on a profession of faith. The methods taken to prevent their increase were ineffectual; "for in October 1538, there was a commission, (says Burnet,) sent to Cranmer, Stokesly, Sampson, and some others, to inquire after Anabaptists; to proceed against them; to restore the penitent; to burn their books; and to deliver the obstinate to the secular arm. But I have not, (says the bishop,) seen what proceedings there were upon this."‡

From a passage in Brandt's History of the reformation it

* History of Religion, vol. ii. p. 469. † Ibid.

‡ Burnet's Hist. Ref. vol. 3. p. 159.

Baptists banished.

appears that the Baptists in England were obliged to leave the country. He says, "In the year 1539 there were put to death at Delft, one and thirty Anabaptists, that fled from England; the men beheaded and the women drowned." In the next year Mr. Barnes was burnt in Smithfield; and in his speech to the people at the stake he declared he was not an Anabaptist as he had been charged with, by saying, "Which sect I detest and abhor; and in this place there hath been burned some of them, whom I never favoured nor maintained."*

On Nov. 16, the King put forth a proclamation, in which he condemned all the books of the Anabaptists and Sacramentarians, and appointed those to be punished that vended them. And in December, he sent a letter to the justices in England, in which, after many other things, they are commanded to take care that all the injunctions, laws, and proclamations, against the Sacramentarians and Anabaptists, be duly executed.

In this year also there was an act of grace passed, from the benefit of which, besides other particular exceptions, all Anabaptists and Sacramentarians, and all those that affirmed there was a fate upon men by which the day of their death was unalterably determined, were excluded. By this it appears, that the king asserted that supremacy which his ceatures had assigned to him; and that he not only condemned those who thought his opponent Luther to be right, and the King wrong, on the subject of the Lord's supper, but also set his throne above the throne of God, "in whose hand our breath is," and who has "determined our days;" and who has declared "that he that believeth and is baptized shall be saved."

* Fox's Martyr, vol. 1. p. 610.

Baptists burned.

That the Lollards had been cruelly treated in his reign previously to this period, is evident from the history of those times. In the year 1511, Joseph Brown was burned. In 1512, William and James Seely, and Joseph Brewster, shared the same fate. In 1514, Joseph Hunn was murdered in the Lollards' tower; and in 1519, Joseph Tewksby and many others ended their lives at the stake. In 1528, seven Baptists, who came over from Holland, were apprehended and imprisoned; two of whom were afterwards burned at Smithfield. In 1535, twenty-two Baptists were apprehended and put to death. In 1539, sixteen men and fifteen women were banished to Delpt in Holland, for opposing infant baptism. At this place they were taken by the papists and put to death. In the same year two Anabaptists were burned beyond Southwark, in the way to Newington; and a little before them, five Dutch Anabaptists were burned at Smithfield.

From a speech delivered by the king at the prorogation of parliament, Dec. 24, 1545, as recited by Lord Herbert, it should seem that the epithet Anabaptist was a term of reproach, applicable to all those who were struggling to promote a reformation in the church and state, just as the epithet Puritan afterwards, and that of Methodist at present, have been indiscriminately applied to all who are zealous for promoting evangelical principles. "What love and charity (says Henry) is there among you, when one calls another heretic and Anabaptist; and he calls him again Papist, Hypocrite, and Pharisee? He adds, Be these tokens of charity among you? I see and hear daily that you of the clergy preach one against another; teach one contrary to another; inveigh one against another, without charity or discretion. Some be too

Latimer's account of the Baptists.

stiff in their old *mumpsimus* ; others be too busy in their new *sumpsimus*.”*

The papists, however, being the stronger party, prevailed on the king to prosecute with unrelenting cruelty all who opposed their system. The next year, Claxton was imprisoned for denying the real presence in the sacrament, and would have been burnt, but for his recantation. But a pious and excellent lady, Anne Askew, who was frequently at court, and a great favourite of queen Catharine Parr, after suffering the most excruciating tortures on the rack, was burned at the stake about June 1546.

Bishop Latimer, in a sermon preached before king Edward vi, alluding to the events of the reign of Henry viii., says, “The Anabaptists that were burnt here in divers partsof England, as I heard of credible men, (I saw them not myself,) went to their death even intrepid as ye will say, without any fear in the world, cheerfully. Also I should have told you here of a certain sect of heretics that speak against this order and doctrine, [the king's supremacy :] they will have no magistrates, no judges on earth. Then I have to tell you what I heard of late, by the relation of a credible person and worshipful man, of a town of this realm of England that hath above five hundred heretics of this erroneous opinion in it, as he said.”†

I cannot but think that these Anabaptists were Wickliffites ; and when it is considered how zealous this good bishop was in supporting the supremacy of the king as the head of the church, is there not reason to suspect, that they were accused of objecting to magistrates and judges, merely because they asserted what all dissenters now assert ? That the civil magistrate ought not to interfere in matters of conscience ; and

* Crosby, vol. i. p. 42.

Ibid p. 62.

Death of Henry viii.

that while it is our duty to "render to Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's," it is equally our duty to give "unto God the things that are God's?"

This popish protestant king died, Jan. 28, 1547, leaving in a very unfinished state, the reformation, which had been begun without his intending it. But the fetters of popery were broken; the scriptures in the mother tongue were sanctioned by parliament; and in 1540, it was enjoined by royal proclamation, that every parish should place one of the copies of the bible, which was called Cranmer's bible, in their churches, under the penalty of forty shillings a month; and though this was suppressed by the king about two years afterwards, through the influence of the popish bishops, yet as the people used to crowd to the churches after their hours of labour to hear it read, there is no doubt but the information which by these means was diffused throughout the land, laid the foundation for that glorious superstructure of Christian liberty, which by the patient sufferings of the zealous Puritans in the succeeding reigns was brought nearly to perfection. The blessings resulting to all classes of people, and particularly to protestant dissenters, from their struggles with ecclesiastical and civil despotism, we now enjoy; and we sincerely pray that they may be transmitted to our descendants unimpaired and improved.

Reformation of the Church.

CHAP. III.

A. D. 1546—1602.

KING Edward vi. came to the throne at the age of nine years and six months; “a prince (says Neal) for learning and piety, for acquaintance with the world, and application to business, the very wonder of his age.”

The majority of the bishops and inferior clergy were on the side of popery; but the government was in the hands of the chief reformers, who began immediately to relax the horrors of the late reign. Persecution ceased, the prison doors were set open, and several who had been forced to quit the kingdom for religion returned home.

The reforming divines, being delivered from that awe with which the imperiousness of the late king had inspired them, began to preach openly against the abuses of popery; and the people in many places, inflamed by their addresses, pulled down the images in the churches without authority.

The famous Genevan reformer, Calvin, appears to have felt deeply interested in the reformation that was going forward in England, and set his heart (says Heylin) upon promoting one wherein “the scripture might be made the rule of faith and worship,” and offered his assistance to archbishop Cranmer for that purpose.* He also wrote to the Protector, Lord Seymour, Oct. 29. 1548, encouraging him to go on, notwithstanding the wars, as Hezekiah did, with his reformation. In this he laments the violence of some

* History of Presbytery, p. 13.

Reformation Imperfect.

who professed the gospel, and complains that he heard there were but few gospel sermons preached in England, and that the preachers recited their discourses coldly. Many of the reformers wished to expunge every thing from the church which was of popish origin. But Cranmer and Ridley, wishing to prevent discontents, consulted with flesh and blood, and resolved to retain the vests and ceremonies. From this period the papists concluded, and that with strong confidence, that the English church would return back again to Rome. Bishop Bonner said publicly, "Having tasted of our broth, they will ere long eat of our beef."*

In the year 1549, bishop Burnet says, "there were many Anabaptists in several parts of England. They were generally Germans, whom the revolutions had forced to change their seats. They held *that infant baptism was no baptism, and so were rebaptized.*"† On Apr. 12, a complaint was brought to the council, that with the strangers who were come into England, some of that persuasion were come over, who were disseminating their principles, and making proselytes. "These people, (says Neal,) besides the principle of adult baptism, held several wild opinions about the trinity, the virgin Mary, and the person of Christ." We cannot, however, rely with implicit confidence on all that is said concerning any sect of Christians by their adversaries; since it is well known that many sects have been charged with holding sentiments which they never held, and that caricature representations have been given of their real sentiments.

The account Burnet gives of these persons is as follows. "Upon Luther's first preaching in Germany, there arose many, who building on some of his principles, carried things

* Advance of the church of England towards Rome, p. 18.

† Hist. Ref. Abrig. p. 85

Rites enjoined in Baptism.

much farther than he did. The chief foundation laid down by him was, *that the scripture was the only rule of Christians.** If this was the principle they held, it is probable that it was not so much their theological sentiments, as their firmness in resisting all imposition in matters of religion, which exposed them to such violent resentments.

In the articles which were framed in 1547, by a committee of divines appointed to examine and reform the offices of the church, it was enacted, that "in the administration of baptism a cross was to be made on the child's forehead and breast, and the devil exorcised to go out and enter no more into him. Also that the child was to be dipped three times in the font, on the right and left sides, and on the breast, if not weak. A white garment was to be put on it in token of innocence, and it was to be anointed on the head, with a short prayer for the unction of the Holy Ghost."†

Is it to be wondered at, if these absurd notions, so popish and antisciptural, should have a tendency to encrease the number of the Baptists, who had both reason and scripture to plead for their sentiments? But such daring innovators, who presumed to rend the seamless coat of Christ, and refused to worship the idol of uniformity which the reformers had set up, were not to be tolerated in a Christian commonwealth.

We find therefore, that in the year 1549, a commission was given to the archbishop of Canterbury, the bishops of Ely, Worcester, Chichester, Lincoln, and Rochester, Sir William Petre, Sir Thomas Smith, Dr. May, and some others, any three being a quorum, to examine and search after all Anabaptists, heretics, and contemners of the common prayer. They were to endeavour to reclaim them, and after penance

* Hist. Ref. vol. ii. p. 110,

† Neal, vol. i. p. 64.

A Baptist recants and does penance.

to give them absolution; but if they continued obstinate, they were to excommunicate, imprison, and deliver them over to the secular arm. This was little better than a protestant inquisition. People had generally thought that all the statutes for burning heretics had been repealed; but it was now said, that heretics were to be burned by the common law of England, and that the statutes were only for directing the manner of conviction, so that the repealing them did not take away that which was grounded on a writ of common law.* Before the commissioners were brought several tradesmen, one of whom, a butcher of the name of Thombe, abjured his principles, of which one was, *that the baptism of infants was not profitable, because it went before faith*. He was commanded, notwithstanding his abjuration, to carry a faggot at St. Paul's, when there should be a sermon setting forth his heresy.†

The most awful instance of persecution in this year was the burning of Joan Boucher of Kent. Burnet says, "She denied that Christ was truly incarnate of the virgin, whose flesh being sinful, he could take none of it; but the Word, by consent of the inward man in the virgin, took flesh of her. These were her words. The commissioners took much pains about her, and had many conferences with her; but she was so extravagantly conceited of her own notions that she rejected with scorn all they said: whereupon she was adjudged an obstinate heretic, and so left to the secular power."

To the other charges preferred against this good woman by her enemies, who would endeavour to blacken her as much as possible in order to justify their own conduct, it is to be added that she was a Baptist; and perhaps this was the sin which was not to be forgiven. "When the compassionate

* Neal, vol. i. p. 60.

† Strypes life of Cranmer, p. 181.

Joan Boucher burned.

young king could not be prevailed upon to sign the warrant for her execution, Cranmer, with his superior learning, was employed to persuade him. He argued from the practice of the Jewish church in stoning blasphemers, which rather silenced his highness than satisfied him: for when at last he yielded to the importunity of the archbishop, he told him with tears in his eyes, that if he did wrong, since it was in submission to his authority, he should answer it before God. This struck the archbishop with surprise; but yet he at last suffered the sentence to be executed.”*

The extraordinary efforts used to bring Joan Boucher to retract her sentiments, prove her to have been a person of note, whose opinions carried more weight and respect than it can be supposed the chimeras of a frantic woman, as she has been sometimes represented, would have done. The account which Mr. Strype gives of her is truly honourable. “She was (he says) a great disperser of Tyndal’s new testament, translated by him into English, and printed at Colen, and was a great reader of scripture herself. Which book also she dispersed in the court, and so became known to certain women of quality, and was particularly acquainted with Mrs. Anne Askew. She used for the greater secresy to tie the books with strings under her apparel, and so pass with them into the court.”† By this it appears that she hazarded her life in dangerous times to bring others to the knowledge of the word of God. To be employed in such a work, and to die in such a cause, is the highest character that could be given to any of the disciples of Christ.

There are some remarks upon this circumstance in Fox’s Latin book of Martyrs, which are omitted in the English

* Burnet’s Hist. of Ref. vol. ii. p. 112.

† Strype’s Eccles. Mem. vol. ii. p. 214.

Mr. Fox interceded for her life.

from a regard, as is supposed, to the reputation of the Martyrs who suffered in the next reign. But Mr. Pierce has given us the following translation in his answer to Nichols, p. 33. "In king Edward's reign, some were put to death for heresy. One of these was Joan Boucher, or Joan of Kent. Now, says Mr. Fox, when the protestant bishops had resolved to put her to death, a friend of Mr. John Rogers, the divinity-reader in St. Paul's church, came to him, earnestly desiring him to use his interest with the Archbishop, that the poor woman's life might be spared, and other means used to prevent the spreading of her opinion, which might be done in time: saying too, that though while she lived, she infected few with her opinion, yet she might bring many to think well of it, by suffering death for it. He pleaded therefore that it was better she should be kept in some prison, without an opportunity of propagating her notion among weak people, and so she would do no harm to others, and might live to repent herself. Rogers on the other hand pleaded, she ought to be put to death. Well then saith his friend, if you are resolved to put an end to her life together with her opinion, chuse some other kind of death, more agreeable to the gentleness and mercy prescribed in the gospel; there being no need, that such tormenting deaths should be taken up, in imitation of the Papists. Rogers answered, that burning alive was no cruel death but easy enough. His friend then hearing these words, which expressed so little regard to poor creatures suffering, answered him with great vehemence, and striking Rogers's hand, which before he held fast, said to him, *Well, perhaps, it may so happen, that you yourselves shall have your hands full of this mild burning.* And so it came to pass; Mr. Rogers was the first man who was burned in Queen Mary's reign. I am apt to think (adds

John Tyndal.

Mr. Pierce) that Mr. Rogers's friend was no other than Fox himself.*

The name of Tyndal having been mentioned, it may not be improper to give a short account of his labours and sufferings in the cause of God. He went young to Oxford, and had part of his education there, and part at Cambridge. After leaving the university, he settled for a time in Gloucestershire; but was obliged to leave his native country on account of persecution. On the continent he translated the new testament into English, and printed it in 1526. This edition was bought up by Sir Thomas More and bishop Tonstall. With the money procured from this source, it was republished in 1530: but as this also contained some reflections on the English bishops and clergy, they commanded that it should be purchased and burnt. In 1532, Tyndal and his associates translated and printed the whole bible; but while he was preparing a second edition, he was apprehended and burnt for heresy in Flanders.

He was a great reformer. It is generally supposed he was born on the borders of Wales. Mr. Thomas thinks this to be very probable, as "Mr. Llewelyn Tyndal and his son Hezekiah were reputable members of the Baptist church at Llanwenarth near Abergavenny, about the year 1700, as appeared by the old church book, and there were some of the same family in those parts still remaining." It is probable, therefore, that Tyndal might derive his superior light from some of the Wickliffites about Hereford and the adjoining counties, where we have already proved that much scriptural truth was for ages deposited. To this great man we are under great obligations for our emancipation from the fetters of popery, as it is not likely these would ever have been broken off, but by the hammer of God's word.

* Crosby, vol. i. p. 61.

John Tyndal.

The sentiments of this celebrated man on the subject of baptism may be collected from the following extract from his works. After reprobating severely the conduct of the Romish clergy for using a latin form of words, he says, "The wasshyng wythout the word helpeth not; but thorow the word it purifyeth and clēseth us, as thou readest Eph 5. How Christ clenseth the congregation in the founteine of water thorow the word: the word is the promise which God hath made. Now as a preacher, in preaching the word of God saveth the hearers that beleve so doeth the wasshyng in that it preacheth and representeth to us the promise that God hath made unto us in Christe, *the wasshyng preacheth unto us that we ar clensted wyth Christe's bloude shedyng which was an offering and a satisfaction for the synne of al that repent and beleve consentyng and submyttyne themselves unto the wyl of God. The plungyng into the water sygnifyeth that we die and are buried with Chryst as cōserving ye old life of synne which is Adā. And the pulling out agayn sygnifyeth that we ryse again with Christe in a new lyfe ful of the holye gooste which shal teach us, and gyde us, and work the wyll of God in us; as thou seest Rom. 6.**

Whether Tyndal baptized persons on a professsion of faith or not, it is certain that his sentiments would naturally lead him to the practice; as what is said of the subject of this ordinance in this quotation, can in no sense apply to infants; who cannot be said to "repent and believe, consenting and submitting themselves unto the will of God." As it relates to the manner in which baptism was at that time administered, his statement is so plain that it requires no comment.

To return to events which took place in England during the reign of Edward vi, we learn from Burnet, that about

* The obedience of all degrees proved by Gods worde imprinted by Wylliam Copland at London 1561.

George Van-Pare burned.

the end of December 1550, after many cavils in the parliament, an act passed for the king's general pardon, from the benefits of which the Anabaptists were excluded. "Last of all (says he) came the king's general pardon; out of which those in the tower and other prisons on account of the state, as also all Anabaptists, were excepted." This is a plain intimation that the Baptists were so numerous as to claim the attention of government, and so obnoxious as to be placed on a level with those who were imprisoned as enemies to the state.

In the same year a visitation of the diocese of London was made by Ridley, the new bishop. Among other questions put to the inferior clergy was the following: "Whether any Anabaptists, or others, used private conventicles, with different opinions and forms from those established." There were also questions about baptism and marriage. Burnet says, "these articles are in bishop Sparrow's collection."*

An event which took place in the next year shows that the Baptists were still offensive to those in power. On April 6, 1551, George Van-Pare, a Dutchman, was condemned, and on the twenty-fifth of the same month was burnt at Smithfield. Speaking of this person, Neal remarks, "He was a man of strict and virtuous life, and very devout: he suffered with great constancy of mind, kissing the stake and faggots that were to burn him." Burnet says, that "the eminent character which he had for piety and devotion, and the fortitude and constancy that he manifested at the stake, tended more to expose Cranmer than any event which had happened. It was now said by the papists, that men of harmless lives might be put to death for heresy by the confession of the reformers themselves. In all the books published in queen

* Hist. of Refor. vol. ii. p. 143—158.

Baptists in Kent.

Mary's days, these instances were always produced; and when Cranmer himself was brought to the stake, the people called it a just retaliation."*

Mr. Strype says that on Sept. 27. 1552, a letter was sent to the Archbishop, to examine a sect newly sprung up in *Kent*. He says it appears not what this sect was; he supposes they may be *the family of love*, or *David George's sect*; but these conjectures of his have no good foundation. "I am persuaded, says Mr. Pierce, this sect was no other than some good honest dissenters, who having been grieved to see so much of popery retained attempted a further reformation themselves, which would be a very displeasing thing to our bishops who expect all men to wait their leisure."† Mr. Strype in his life of Cranmer p. 208, says expressly that these persons were *Anabaptists*. In all probability many of these came to Joan Boucher's end, as no argument could convince the divines of this age of the absurdity and wickedness of putting men to death for conscience sake.

Burnet seems to think that the sufferings of these persons was on account of their erroneous opinions respecting the person of Christ; and says that "the other sort of Anabaptists, who only denied infant baptism, had no severities used against them; but that several books were written against them, to justify infant baptism; and the practice of the church so early begun, and so universally spread, was thought a good plea, especially being grounded on such arguments in scripture, as did demonstrate, at least the lawfulness of it."‡ However this might be, we are hereby furnished with an important piece of information, proving, that there were persons among them who were able to defend their principles, and

* Neal, vol. i. p. 61.

† Answer to Nichol, p. 56.

‡ Burnet Abridg. part ii. p. 87.

Death of King Edward VI.

who were not afraid to do so, though they thereby exposed themselves to imprisonment and death.

The next year it was resolved in council to reform the doctrine of the church. Archbishop Cranmer and Bishop Ridley were appointed to this work, who framed forty-two articles upon the chief points of the Christian faith. These were entitled, "Articles agreed upon by the bishops and other learned men, in the convocation held in London, in the year 1552, for the avoiding diversity of opinions, and establishing consent touching true religion: Published by the king's authority." Neal does not notice the alteration in the twenty eighth article, which now stood as follows. "The custom of the church for baptizing young children, is both to be commended, and by all means to be retained in the church."* It is worthy of observation, that infant baptism was not retained because it was commanded by Christ, or practised by the apostles and first Christians, but as *the custom of the church*.

The excellent young king was a friend to toleration. John a Lasco, who was the pastor of a foreign church, published a work which was dedicated to Sigismund, king of Poland, 1555; in which it is said, that "King Edward desired that the rites and ceremonies used under popery, should be purged out by degrees; and that strangers should have churches to observe all things according to *apostolical observation only*; that by these means the English churches might be excited to embrace apostolical purity with the unanimous consent of the states of the kingdom." He adds, that "the king was at the head of this project, and that Cranmer promoted it; but that some great persons stood in the way." Martin Bucer, a German divine, and professor of divinity in Cambridge, a person in

* Crosby, vol. i. p. 54.

Queen Mary.

high estimation with the young king, drew up a plan and presented it to his majesty, in which he wrote largely on ecclesiastical discipline. The king having read it, set himself to write a general discourse about reformation, but did not live to finish it. His death, which happened in 1553, in the sixteenth year of his age, and the seventh of his reign, put an end to all his noble designs for perfecting the reformation. Dr. Leighton says, when speaking of his premature death, "This king, a gracious plant whereof the soil was not worthy, like another Josiah, setting himself with all his might to promote the reformation, abhorred and forbid that any mass should be permitted to his sister. Further, he was desirous not to leave a hoof of the Romish beast in his Kingdom, as he was taught by some of the sincerer sort. But as he wanted instruments to effect this good, so he was mightily opposed in all his good designs by the prelatists, which caused him in his godly jealousy, in the very anguish of his soul, to pour out his soul in tears."* Neal says, "He was an incomparable prince, of most promising expectations; and in the judgment of most impartial persons, the very phoenix of his age. It was more than whispered that he was poisoned."†

During the reign of the sanguinary Mary, who succeeded him, it is not to be doubted that the Baptists came in for their full share of suffering, and that many of the martyrs were of that denomination, which was then numerous, although their sentiments have not been handed down to us upon that subject.

In the first year of her reign, 1553, we have an account of the examination of Mr. Woodman before the bishop of Winchester, in the church of St. Mary Overy's, in which the bishop said, "Hold him a book: if he refuse to swear, he

* An appeal to the parliament, &c. † Neal, vol. i. p. 81.

David George taken out of his grave.

is an Anabaptist, and shall be excommunicated." Also in the examination of Mr. Philpot before the lords of the council, Nov. 5. 1555, Rich said to him, "All heretics boast of the Spirit of God, and every one would have a church by himself, as Joan of Kent and the Anabaptists."

Spanhemius, in his account of David George of Delpt in Holland, who was driven from his own country by persecution, and died in London, and was honourably interred in St. Lawrence's church, informs us, that three years afterwards, it was discovered that he was an Anabaptist; upon which his followers were sought after; a certain number of divines and lawyers were appointed to examine them; his opinions were condemned by an ordinance; his picture was carried about and burnt; and his corps taken up and burnt likewise.* It is probable that David George was a member of a church of foreign Baptists that was formed in London in the former reign.

Brandt assures us that "in the year 1553, the *low country exiles*, who in the time of Edward vi. had gathered a congregation at London (which upon his death was scattered by Queen Mary) after a dreadful northern journey in which they suffered much from the Lutherans, found at Wismar two distinct communities of Anabaptists."†

These persecutions appear to have inspired the Baptists with additional fortitude in avowing their attachment to their despised tenets; for in 1557, we find that many were imprisoned, being charged with holding the following opinions.—(1.) *That infant baptism is anti-scriptural*—(2.) *That it is commanded by the pope*—(3.) *That Christ commanded teaching to go before baptism.* These are sentiments which the Baptists still

* Crosby vol. i. p. 63, 64.

† Hist. Refor. vol. i. book iv.

Queen Elizabeth.

profess, and which they conceive have never been disproved. There was also a complaint exhibited against such as favoured the gospel at Ipswich, to the Queen's Council held at Beccles in Suffolk May 18. 1556, and among the crimes enumerated we find that four women where accused of refusing to have their children dipped in the Fonts at St. Peter's church. One of these is said to be a midwife, and it is particularly requested that "none might be suffered to be midwives but such as are catholic, because of evil council as such times require a number of women assembled."*

This cruel and bigotted princess died Nov. 17, 1558. Her death put a close to a succession of cruelties which none have fully described, many hundreds having suffered death for religion; and there being but one instance in which a reprieve was granted to a person condemned for heresy. "Her reign (says Neal) was in every respect calamitous to the nation, and ought to be transmitted down to posterity in letters of blood."

Queen Elizabeth succeeded her sister. In her reign there was much persecution. She was, however, preferable to Mary, though she seems to have been more than half a papist, and exercised a despotic sway over the lives of her subjects. The same severities which Mary exercised towards dissenters from the establishment when it was popish, were used towards them by Elizabeth when it became protestant. Protestants were persecuted by both;—by Mary, for refusing to subscribe to the absurd notions of transubstantiation and purgatory; by Elizabeth, for remonstrating against archbishops, and lord bishops; against the maintenance of the priesthood by tithes; against the kingdom of Christ being a kingdom of this world; against an unpreaching ministry; against the

* Fox, vol. iii. p. 791.

Miles Coverdale.

square cap and surplice ; and against rites and ceremonies and ecclesiastical canons of human invention and imposition. Some of the dissenters objected to all these ; others to only a part.

The zeal of the bishops during this period was principally directed towards the support of ceremonies. To refuse a compliance with the injunctions of the queen respecting these popish inventions, was considered reason sufficient to deprive the most eminent divines of their station in the church, of their liberty, and of their life ; at a time too when there were but few ministers of the gospel in England, and the people were perishing for lack of knowledge.

The spirit of the times may be judged of by the following circumstance. The plague being in London and several parts of the country in the summer of 1562, a little stop was thereby put to the zeal for uniformity, yet none were preferred in the church who scrupled the habits. In proof of this we may produce the examples of two of the worthiest and most learned divines of the age. The first of these was the venerable Miles Coverdale, formerly bishop of Exeter. This excellent man had been long employed in assisting Tyn-dal in the translation of the bible. He was born in Yorkshire, was educated at Cambridge, and proceeded doctor in the university of Tubingen. Returning to England in the time of king Edward, he was made bishop of Exeter, 1551. Upon the accession of Queen Mary, he was imprisoned, and would have been burnt ; but by the intercession of the king of Denmark, he was sent over into that country. When Elizabeth came to the throne, he returned to England, and assisted at the consecration of her first archbishop of Canterbury : yet because he would not comply with the ceremonies and habits, he was neglected, and had no pre-

Mr. John Fox.

ferment. "This reverend man (says Mr. Strype) being now old and poor, Grindal, bishop of London, gave him the small living of St. Magnus at the Bridge-foot, where he preached quietly about two years. But not coming up to the uniformity required, he was persecuted thence, and obliged to relinquish his parish a little before his death, which took place May 20, 1567, at the age of eighty-one years. He was a celebrated preacher, admired and followed by all the puritans."*

The other was that venerable man, Mr. John Fox the martyrologist, a grave, learned, and laborious divine, and an exile for religion. While banished from his native country, he employed his time in writing the "Acts and Monuments" of that church which would hardly receive him into her bosom, and in collecting materials relative to the martyrdom of those who suffered for religion in the reigns of Henry viii. and Mary. This he published first in Latin for the benefit of foreigners, and then in English for the use of his own countrymen, in 1561. This book gave a most severe blow to popery. It was dedicated to the queen, and was in such high reputation that it was ordered to be placed in the churches, where it raised in the people an invincible horror and detestation of that religion which had shed so much innocent blood.

The queen professed a particular regard for Mr. Fox, and used to call him father: but as he refused to subscribe to her articles and ceremonies, he had no promotion for a considerable time. At length, through the influence of a friend, he procured a prebend in the cathedral of Sarum. This good old man would not submit to such impositions. When he was called upon to subscribe, he took his Greek

* Life of Parker. p, 149.

Baptists persecuted.

testament from his pocket, and said, "To this will I subscribe." When they offered him the canons, he refused, saying, "I have nothing in the church but a prebend at Salisbury; and, if you take it away from me, much good may it do you." In a letter to his friend Dr. Humphreys, he thus pleasantly reproached the ingratitude of the times in which he lived. "I still wear the same clothes, and remain in the same sordid condition, that England received me in when I first came home out of Germany; nor do I change my degree or order, which is that of the *mendicants*, or if you please of the friars preachers."*

That no favour would be shown to the Baptists in such times as these, is what might naturally be expected. The share they had in the cruelties inflicted on dissenters will appear in a few instances which the historians of those times have preserved. Mr. Fuller says, "Now began the Anabaptists wonderfully to encrease in the land; and as we are sorry that any countrymen should be seduced by that opinion, so we are glad that the English as yet were free from that infection: for on Easter day was disclosed a congregation of Dutch Anabaptists, without Aldgate in London; whereof seven-and-twenty were taken and imprisoned; and four, bearing faggots at Paul's cross, solemnly recanted their dangerous opinions. Next month, one Dutchman and ten women were condemned; of whom one woman was persuaded to renounce her error; eight were banished the land; and two more were so obstinate that command was issued out for their burning in Smithfield."†

What this writer says of the English being previously free from this infection, shows how little he was acquainted

* Wilson's Hist. of Dissenting Churches, vol. i. p. 10.

† Church Hist. Cent. 16. p. 164

Five Dutch Baptists recant.

with the history of the church, as the numerous instances we have mentioned abundantly prove. The account, however, which is here given, is an evidence of the stedfastness of these people in holding their opinions, as but five were influenced by threats and promises to recant; and one of these, a woman, not till after she had been condemned to be executed. This sentence two of the men cheerfully suffered, rather than deny Him who has said, "Whosoever loveth his own life more than me is not worthy of me; and whosoever loseth his life for my sake, the same shall find it."

The form of abjuration made by these Walloon Baptists is a curious document, as it proves to what lengths the prelatists wished persons professing these sentiments to go. It was taken before Dr. De Laune, in 1575, in the eighteenth year of Elizabeth, in the Dutch church, Austin friars, London, of which the doctor was minister. It is as follows: "Whereas we being seduced by the devil, the spirit of error, and by false teachers, have fallen into the most damnable errors; that Christ took not flesh of the substance of the virgin Mary, *that the infants of the faithful ought not to be baptized*, that a christian may not be a magistrate, or bear the sword and office of authority, and that it is not lawful for a christian man to take an oath. Now by the grace of God, and the assistance of good and learned ministers of Christ's church, we understand the same to be most damnable and detestable heresies; and do ask God, before his church, mercy for the said former errors; and do forsake, recant, and renounce them; and we abjure them from the bottom of our hearts, protesting we certainly believe the contrary. And further, we confess that the whole doctrine established and published in the church of England, and also that which is received by the Dutch church in London, is found true

Mr. Fox's letter to the Queen.

according to **God's** word. Whereunto in all things we submit ourselves, and will be most gladly members of the said Dutch church ; from henceforth utterly abandoning and forsaking all and every Anabaptistical error.*

From this account we learn what were the errors they were charged with, and nothing but a formal recantation of which would preserve them from either banishment or death. To prevent those from being executed who were condemned, Fuller says, that a grave divine sent a melting letter to the queen, begging they might not be burnt. " This was written, (he adds) in elegant latin by Mr. John Fox, from whose hand I transcribed it. He was very loth that Smithfield, formerly consecrated with martyr's ashes, should now be profaned with heretics, and desirous that the papists might enjoy their own monopoly of cruelty in burning condemned persons."

The following is the translation of this letter, which does credit to the heart of the writer.—" Most serene and happy princess, most illustrious queen, the honour of our country, and honour of our age. As nothing hath ever been farther from my thoughts and expectation than ever to trouble your most excellent majesty by my troublesome interruption ; so it grieves me very much that I must break that silence which has hitherto been the result of my mind. But so it now happens, by I know not what infelicity, that the present time obliges me, contrary to my hope and opinion, to that which of all things in the world I least desired ; and though hitherto I have been troublesome to nobody, I am now, contrary to my inclination, constrained to be importunate, even with my princess ; not in any matter or cause of my own, but through the calamity brought upon others ; and by how much

* Crosby, vol. i. p. 69.

Letter of Mr. Fox to the Queen.

the more sharp and lamentable that is, by so much the more I am spurred on to deprecate it.

“ I understand there are some here in England, not English but come hither from Holland, I suppose both men and women, who having been tried according to law, and having publicly declared their repentance, are happily reclaimed. Many others are condemned to exile; a right sentence in my opinion. But I hear there are one or two of these who are appointed to the most severe of punishments, viz. *burning*, except your clemency prevent. Now in this one affair I conceive there are two things to be considered; the one is the wickedness of their errors, the other, the sharpness of their punishment. As to their errors indeed, no man of sense can deny that they are most absurd, and I wonder that such monstrous opinions could come into the mind of any Christian; but such is the state of human weakness, if we are left never so little awhile destitute of the divine light, whither is it we do not fall? And we have great reason to give God thanks that I hear not of any Englishman that is inclined to this madness. As to these fanatical sects, therefore, it is certain they are by no means to be countenanced in a commonwealth, but in my opinion ought to be suppressed by proper correction. But to *roast alive* the bodies of poor wretches, that offend rather through blindness of judgment than perverseness of will, in fire and flames, raging with pitch and brimstone, is a hard-hearted thing, and more agreeable to the practice of the Romanists than the custom of the gospellers; yea, is evidently of the same kind, as if it had flowed from the Romish priests, from the first author of such cruelty, Innocent the third. Oh, that none had ever brought such a Phalarian bull into the meek church of Christ! I do not speak such things because I am pleased

Letter of Mr. Fox.

with their wickedness, or favour the errors of any man; but seeing that I myself am a man, I must therefore favour the life of man; not that he should err, but that he should repent. Nay, my pity extends not only to the life of man, but also to the beasts.

“For so it is perhaps a folly in me; but I speak the truth, that I can hardly pass by a slaughter-house where cattle are killing, but my mind shrinks back with a secret sense of their pains. And truly I greatly admire the clemency of God in this, who had such respect to the mean brute creatures formerly prepared for sacrifices, that they must not be committed to the flames before their blood had been poured out at the foot of the alter. Whence we may gather, that in inflicting of punishments, though just, we must not be over rigorous, but temper the sharpness of rigour with clemency. Wherefore, if I may be so bold with the majesty of so great a princess, I humbly beg of your royal highness, for the sake of Christ, who was consecrated to suffer for the lives of many, this favour at my request, which even the divine clemency would engage you to; that if it may be, (and what cannot your authority do in these cases?) these miserable wretches may be spared; at least that a stop may be put to the horror, by changing the punishment into some other kind. There are excommunications, and close imprisonments; there are bonds; there is perpetual banishment, burning of the hand and whipping, or even slavery itself. This one thing I most earnestly beg, that the flames of Smithfield, so long ago extinguished by your happy government, may not be again revived. But if I may not obtain this, I pray with the greatest earnestness that out of your great pity you would grant us a month or two in which we may try whether the Lord will give them grace to turn from their

Baptists burnt in Smithfield.

dangerous errors, lest with the destruction of their bodies, their souls be in danger of eternal ruin."

This melting pathetic letter had but little effect upon the high and bigotted spirit of Elizabeth. She answered, "That if after a month's reprieve, and conference with divines, they would not recant their errors, they should certainly suffer." This they refused to do, and hereupon the writ *De hæretico comburendo*, which for seventeen years had only hung up in *terrorem*, was now put in execution; and these two Baptists, John Wielmaker and Henry Tor Woort, were burnt in Smithfield, July 22.

In the year 1589, Dr. Some, a man of great note, and a violent churchman, published a treatise against some of the puritans, Greenwood, Barrow, Penry, and others. In this he attempts to show what agreement there was between them and the English Anabaptists. The opinions he charges the Anabaptists with, when, as Crosby says, they are stripped of the dress which he has put upon them, are as follow—"That the ministers of the gospel ought to be maintained by the voluntary contributions of the people—that the civil power has no right to make and impose ecclesiastical laws—that the high commission court was an anti-christian usurpation—that those who are qualified to teach ought not to be hindered by the civil power—that though the Lord's prayer be a rule and foundation of prayer, yet it is not to be used as a form and that no forms of prayer ought to be imposed on the church—that the baptism administered by the church of Rome is invalid—that a true constitution and discipline are essential to a true church, and that the worship of God in the church of England is in many things defective."—The doctor touches but briefly, says Crosby, on their opinion of baptizing believers only, and brings up the rear of his accu-

Genuine Principles of Dissent.

sations with saying, "they esteem it blasphemy for any man to arrogate to himself the title of Doctor of Divinity" that is, as he explains it, to be called Rabbi, or master of other men's faith.*

Who does not see in these articles the genuine principles of the new testament, and the true ground upon which as protestant dissenters we ought to take our stand? The right of the magistrate to interfere in religious matters being denied, religious establishments, which are founded upon the assumption of that principle, must be necessarily dissented from, and, if the principle can be proved to be false, must fall with it.

The Baptists of the present day have no reason to be ashamed of these sentiments of their predecessors, who at a time when the principles of dissent were so imperfectly understood, had such clear ideas on the subject, and sealed the truth with their blood.

From Dr. Some we learn also that at the time when he wrote, 1589, "There were several Anabaptistical conventicles in London and other places." It seems then the Baptists had at this early period formed distinct churches of persons of their own sentiments, both in London, and in different parts of the country. He adds, "Some persons of these sentiments have been bred at our universities." That is to say, some of the zealous puritanical divines had pursued their principles to their legitimate consequences, and had rejected infant baptism, with the other ceremonies of the church. The doctor, to expose the Baptists, relates a story of one whom he calls T. L., "who at a conventicle in London took upon him to expound the scriptures, conceive long prayers on a sudden, and to excommunicate two persons who were formerly of that brotherhood, but had now left them."

Baptist Churches.

Who this T. L. was we know not; but it clearly appears that he was the pastor of the church, and that in their name, he declared that some persons who had left them were no longer of their communion. His explaining the scriptures, and praying without the use of a form, will not now be considered as either unaccountable or heretical. We are much obliged to Dr. Some for enabling us to trace the history of our churches in England, since the Reformation, to a period almost as early as that of the presbyterian churches, the first of which in England was founded at Wandsworth in the year 1572.

The persons against whom Dr. Some wrote were men of respectable talents, and their names shine with distinguished lustre in the annals of the puritans. They were eminent divines, and illustrious martyrs in the cause of our Lord Jesus Christ. Barrow and Greenwood, after being kept in prison for many months, and there exposed to all the severities of cold, hunger, and nakedness, were, on the last day of March 1592, brought to Tyburn in a cart, and exposed under the gallows a long time, to see whether the terrors of death would affright them; but remaining constant, they were taken back to Newgate, and on April 6. they were carried a second time to Tyburn and executed. At the place of execution they gave such testimonies of their unfeigned piety towards God, and loyalty to the queen, and prayed so earnestly for her long and prosperous reign, that when Dr. Reynolds, who attended them, reported their behaviour to her majesty, she is said to have expressed her sorrow that she had yielded to their death.

The persecution of those who separated from the church of England, was from this time to the end of the queen's reign very severe.

Petition from the Justices of Norfolk.

Many of them on this account left the kingdom ; and those who remained in it were perpetually harrassed and tormented by fines and imprisonment. That the Baptists were deeply involved in the suffering of these times, may be gathered from the supplication of the justices of the peace for the county of Norfolk. A complaint had been made to them of the long and illegal imprisonment of a puritan, the Rev. Robert Wright, and hereupon their worships were pleased to address Aylmer, bishop of London, on his behalf. This so offended his lordship, that he drew up twelve articles of impeachment against the justices themselves, and caused them to be summoned before the queen and council to answer for their misdemeanors.

These high proceedings of the bishop disgusted both the clergy and the whole country ; and the justices, notwithstanding his late citation of them before the council, wrote to their honours, praying them to interpose in behalf of divers godly ministers. The words of this supplication, says Neal, are worth remembering, because they discover the cruelty of the commissioners, who made no distinction between the vilest of criminals and conscientious ministers.—“ The faithful ministers of the word (say they) are marshalled with the worst malefactors ; presented, indicted, arraigned, and condemned, for matters, as we presume, of very slender moment, some for leaving the holidays unbidden ; some for singing the psalm *Nunc Dimittis* in the morning ; some for turning the questions in baptism concerning faith, from the infants to the godfathers, which is but you for thou ; some for leaving out the cross in baptism ; some for leaving out the ring in marriage. A most pitiful thing it is to see the back of the law turned to the adversary [the papists] and the edge with all its sharpness laid upon the sound and true-hearted subject.

Remarks.

“ We regard order to be the rule of the Spirit of God, and desire uniformity in all the duties of the church, according to the proportion of faith ; but if these weak ceremonies are so indifferent as to be left to the discretion of ministers, we think it (under correction) very hard to have them go under so hard handling, to the utter discredit of their whole ministry, and the profession of the truth.

“ We serve her majesty and the country [as justices of the peace] according to law. We reverence the law, and law-maker : when the law speaks, we keep silence : when it commandeth, we obey. By law we proceed against all offenders : we touch none that the law spareth, and spare none that the law toucheth. We allow not of papists ; of the family of Love ; of Anabaptists, or Brownists. No, we punish all these. Yet we are christened with the odious name of puritans ; a term compounded of the heresies above mentioned, which we disclaim. The papists pretend to be immaculate : the family of Love cannot sin, they being deified, as they say, in God. But we groan under the burden of our sins, and confess them to God ; and at the same time we labour to keep ourselves and our profession unblamable. This is our puritanism ; a name given to such magistrates and ministers, and others, as have a strict eye upon their juggling.

“ We think ourselves bound in duty to unfold these matters to your lordships ; and if you shall please to call us to the proof of them, it is the thing we most desire.”

When such severities were practised against men who ventured to alter a *pronoun* in the baptismal service, for the relief of burdened consciences, it is certain that those called Anabaptists, who rejected the rite itself, would not escape chastisement. Even the justices of Norfolk say, “ we punish these.” It is remarkable, that while they mention some

Baptists banished the Kingdom.

things that made other sects odious, they say nothing to the discredit of the Baptists. May we not infer that their only error was a denial of infant baptism? But for this crime they were considered as unfit to reside in a Christian country among Christian people, and therefore the queen published a royal proclamation commanding all Anabaptists and other heretics to leave the kingdom, whether they were natives or foreigners, under the penalties of imprisonment and loss of goods. Consequently all Baptists were obliged either to conceal their sentiments, or fly into those countries where they might without molestation worship God according to the dictates of conscience. Many of them went over to Holland; so that there were perhaps fewer dissenters in England of all denominations at this time than at any period since the reformation. The terrors of the Star chamber, and the High commission court, or as it has been more properly called, the English inquisition, operated so powerfully as almost to exterminate all those who had the simplicity and godly sincerity to oppose that church, which with bold effrontery had declared, "The church hath power to decree rites and ceremonies, and authority in matters of faith;" to which might have been added,—and a disposition to punish those who will not implicitly receive her dogmas.

Things were in this state at the time of the queen's death, which took place March 24, 1602, in the seventieth year of her age, and the forty-fifth of her reign. Neal says, "As to her religion, she affected a middle way between popery and puritanism, though she was more inclined to the former. She understood not the rights of conscience in matters of religion, and is therefore justly charged with persecuting principles. More sanguinary laws were made in her reign than in those of any of her predecessors. Her hands

Puritans found churches in Holland.

were stained with the blood of papists and puritans : the former were executed for denying her supremacy, and the latter for sedition or non-conformity.”

CHAP. IV.

A. D. 1602—1625.

THE persecuted puritans found in Holland an asylum which sheltered them from the rage of their enemies ; and with the permission of the states, they founded churches at Amsterdam, Arnheim, Middleburg, Leyden, and other places. One of the churches at Amsterdam was founded by Mr. John Smyth, and was of the Baptist denomination.*

In order to preserve the connection of our history, it will be necessary to give some account of Mr. Smyth, who was the first pastor of this church. He was one of the disciples of Robert Brown, from whom the Brownists derived their name. At what time he embraced these sentiments, we are not informed ; but he is spoken of as one of their leaders in 1592. He was previously a beneficed minister in the church of England, at Gainsborough, in Lincolnshire. Before his secession, he spent nine months in studying the controversy, and held a disputation with Mr. Hildersham, and some other divines, on conformity to the ceremonies, and on the use of prescribed forms of prayer. In the above-mentioned county, and on the borders of Yorkshire and Nottinghamshire, the principles of the separation had made an extensive impression. Mr. Smyth, the pastor of one of their churches, and

* Life of Ainsworth, p. 36.

Baptist Church at Amsterdam.

Mr. Robinson and Mr. Clifton, the co-pastors of another church, being harassed by the High commission court, removed with their followers to Holland. Mr. Smyth and his followers settled at Amsterdam, 1606, and joined themselves to the English church of which Johnson was pastor, and Ainsworth teacher. It was not long, however, before a serious breach took place. The subjects of debate which gave rise to this division, are said to have been certain opinions very similar to those afterwards espoused by the Arminians. Mr. Smyth is said to have maintained the doctrines of free will and universal redemption; to have opposed the predestination of particular individuals to eternal life, and the doctrine of original sin; and to have maintained that believers might fall from that grace which would have saved them, if they had continued in it. In addition to this, Mr. Smyth differed from them on the subject of baptism. The steps which led him to the rejection of infant baptism, were the following.

The Brownists denied that the church of England was a true church, and that her ministers acted under a divine commission, and consequently considered every ordinance administered by them to be null and void. They were guilty, however, of this inconsistency, that while they reordained their ministers, they did not renew their baptism. The impropriety of this conduct was discovered by Mr. Smyth, whose doubts concerning the validity of baptism in the established church, led him eventually to renounce infant baptism altogether. Upon a further consideration of the subject, he saw reason to conclude that immersion was the true and proper meaning of the word baptism, and that it should be administered to those only who were capable of professing faith in Christ.

Mr. John Smyth, the first Pastor.

The other ministers of the separation appear to have treated Mr. Smyth with great asperity. They charged him with having proclaimed open war against God's everlasting covenant, and as being one who would murder the souls of babes and sucklings, by depriving them of the visible seals of salvation. They also said, that not being able to find any minister who had been baptized on a profession of faith, and objecting to the doctrinal sentiments of the German baptists, he had profaned the covenant by first baptizing himself, and afterwards his followers.

In England, the learned and excellent Bishop Hall employed his pen against him and the ministers of the separation, in a work entitled, *A common Apology of the Church of England, against the unjust challenges of the over just sect, commonly called Brownists, &c.* The dedication prefixed to this work is as follows—"To our gracious and blessed mother, the church of England, the meanest of all her children dedicates this her apology, and wisheth all peace and happiness." The Bishop proceeds by saying, "no less than a year and a half is past since I wrote a loving monitory letter to two of thine unworthy sons, [Smyth and Robinson] which I heard were fled from thee in person, in affection, and somewhat in opinion. Supposing them yet thine in the main substance, though in some circumstances their own. Since which, one of them hath washed off thy font-water as unclean, and hath written desperately against thee and his own fellows."

It is remarkable that the bishop says nothing of Mr. Smyth's having baptized himself, which from the particular way in which he speaks of him and of what he considered his errors, he doubtless would have done, if this had been the case. There is no doubt but this silly charge was fabricated by his enemies, and it is an astonishing instance of cre-

Bishop Hall's opinion of Mr. Smyth.

dulity that writers of eminent talents have contributed to perpetuate the slander. The character which Bishop Hall gives of him, renders this charge altogether improbable. Addressing Mr. Robinson, he says, " My knowledge of Master Smyth whom you followed, and yourself, would not let me think of you as you deserved. The truth is, my charity and your uncharitableness, have led us to mistake each other. I hoped you had been one of their guides; both because Lincolnshire was your country, and Master Smyth your oracle and general.—I wrote not to you alone. What is become of your partner, yea, your guide? Woe is me, he hath renounced christendom with our church, and hath washed off his former waters with new, and now condemns you all for not separating farther, no less than we condemn you for separating so far. He tells you true: your station is unsafe: either you must go forward to him, or back to us. There is no remedy: either you must go forward to anabaptism, or come back to us. All your rabbins cannot answer that charge of your rebaptized brother. If we be a true church, you must return: if we be not, as a false church is no church of God, you must rebaptize. If our baptism be good, then is our constitution good.—As for the title of ring-leader, wherewith I stiled this pamphleteer; if I have given him too much honour in his sect, I am sorry. Perhaps I should have put him, (pardon a homely, but in this sense not unusual, word) in the tail of his train: perhaps I should have endorsed my letter to Master Smyth and his shadow."*

From all these expressions, which show the eminence of Mr. Smyth among the ministers of the separation, it is evident he was considered as a person of great consequence, and that his disciples were very numerous. This corroborates

* p. 723—794.

Mr. Smyth's reasons for leaving the Brownists.

rates what is said by Ephraim Pagit; that "he was accounted one of the grandees of the separation, and that he and his followers did at once as it were swallow up all the rest of the separation."*

In the introduction prefixed to a work printed in Holland in the year 1609, and entitled, *The character of the Beast, or the false constitution of the church discovered in certain passages betwixt Mr. R. Clifton and John Smyth, concerning the christian baptism of new creatures or new born babes in Christ: and false baptism of infants born after the flesh. Referred to two propositions, 1. That infants are not to be baptized. 2. That Antichristians converted are to be admitted into the true church by baptism.* Mr. Smyth thus speaks in vindication of the separation of himself and friends from the Brownists, because infant baptism was retained in their churches:—"Be it known therefore to all the separation, that we account them in respect of their constitution to be as very a harlot as either her mother England, or her grandmother Rome is, out of whose loins she came; And although once in our ignorance we have acknowledged her a true church; yet now being better informed, we revoke this our erroneous judgment, and protest against her as well for her false constitution as for her false ministry, worship, and government. The true constitution of the church is of a new creature, baptized into the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost: the false constitution is of infants baptized, &c."

The manner of his reasoning concerning the restoration of the ordinance of baptism, when lost, is as follows. "The Anabaptists, as you call them, do not set up a new covenant and gospel, though they set up a new or apostolic baptism, which antichrist had overthrown: and whereas you say they have no warrant to baptize themselves, I say, as

* Heresiography, p. 62, 64.

The manner in which Baptism was restored.

much as you have to set up a new church, yea, fully as much. For if a true church may be erected, which is the most noble ordinance of the new testament, then much more baptism: and if a true church cannot be erected without baptism, for baptism is the visible sign of the church, as disciples are the matter; then seeing you confess that a true church may be erected, you cannot deny (though you do deny it in opposing the truth) that baptism may be also recovered. And seeing, when all Christ's visible ordinances are lost, either men must recover them again, or must let them alone: if they let them alone till extraordinary men come with miracles and tongues, as the apostles did, then men are Familists; (for that is their opinion) or if they must recover them, men must begin so to do; and then two men joining together can make a church, as you say. Why might they not then baptize, seeing they cannot conjoin into Christ without baptism? (Matt. xxviii. 19. xviii. 10. Gal. iii. 27.) But it is evident that all Christ's commandments must be obeyed: ergo, this commandment of having and using the communion of the church, ministry, worship, and government, those holy means of salvation which the Lord in his mercy has given us in his covenant, and commanded us to use. And if all the commandments of God must be obeyed, then this of baptism, and this warrant is sufficient for assuming baptism. Now for baptizing a man's self, there is as good warrant as for a man's churching himself: for two men singly are no church; jointly they are a church, and they both of them put a church upon themselves: for as both these persons unchurched, yet have power to assume the church, each of them for himself and others in communion; so each of them unbaptized, hath power to assume baptism for himself with others in communion.*

Mr. Smyth's doctrinul sentiments.

Here are two principles laid down by Mr. Smyth, which contradict the account given of him. The first is, that upon the supposition of the true baptism being lost for some time through the disuse of it, it is necessary there should be two persons to unite in the administration. The second is, that the first administrator must be a member of some church, who shall call and empower him to administer it to the other members.

Now it is reasonable to suppose that his practice was conformable to the above principles; and as there is mention made of Mr. Helwisse and Mr. John Morton,* two ministers who were of his opinion, and who joined with him in the rules which he laid down, their method must have been this:—The seceders must first have formed themselves into a church, and then the church must have appointed two of its ministers to restore the ordinance by baptizing each other, and after that to baptize the rest of the church. (E)

Mr. Smyth must have died soon after this work was printed; for in 1611 there appeared *A confession of faith*, published by the remainder of Mr. Smyth's company, with an appendix giving some account of his last sickness and death. A few articles of this confession are preserved by Crosby, in his first volume, extracted from the works of Mr. Smyth, by Mr. Robinson, pastor of the Brownist church at Leyden. In the Appendix to Crosby's second volume this confession is given in 27 articles. From this it appears that their sentiments resembled those which are now denominated Arminian; but there is no evidence of their holding those silly and erroneous opinions which they have been charged with by their enemies.

James the first was now sitting on the throne of England, a prince who for vanity and bigotry has perhaps been sel-

* Crosby, v. i. p. 99.

Conduct of James I. towards the Puritans.

dom equalled. From such a king, and from such bishops as Whitgift and Bancroft, the puritans of whatever denomination could expect no favour. "The king (says Rapin) intimated at the first, that he would have regard to the tender consciences of such Catholics as could not comply with the received doctrine of the church of England; but in this there was not the least indulgence for the tender consciences of the puritans: these were all a set of obstinate people, who deserved to have no favour shewed them."*

In the year 1608, one Enoch Clapham wrote a small piece entitled, *Errors on the right hand*, against the several sects of protestants in those times; in which he represented by way of dialogue, the opinions which each sect held, and somewhat of their state and condition. He notices their fleeing out of their own nation to plant a church among a people of another language; and that they alleged in their defence, Elijah's fleeing in time of persecution, and our Saviour's advice to his disciples, if they were persecuted in one city to flee into another. He also complains of those who remained in England, for leaving the public assemblies, and running into woods and meadows, and meeting in bye stables, barns and haylofts, for service.

He distinguishes the Anabaptists from the puritans and Brownists on the one hand, and from the Arians and Socinians on the other; and represents them all as being zealous opposers of each other.

The Anabaptists, according to his account, held that repentance and faith must precede baptism; that the baptism of the church of England and of the puritans was invalid, and that the true baptism was amongst them. He says farther, that they complained of the term Anabaptist as a name

* Hist. of England. vol. ii. p. 163.

Description of the Baptists.

of reproach cast upon them; and also takes notice that some of this opinion were Dutchmen, who, besides the denial of infant baptism, held that it was unlawful to bear arms, &c. That there were others who went under this denomination that were Englishmen, to whom he does not so directly charge the former opinions, but only the denial of their first baptism, and separating both from the established church and other dissenters; adding that they came out from the Brownists, and that there was a congregation of them in Holland.*

The congregation to which he refers is doubtless that which we have mentioned, under the care of Mr. Smyth, which existed at this time in Holland; and from what Mr. Johnson, pastor of one of the English churches, says in a work published in 1617, it is evident that his ministry was very successful, and that his principles were extensively embraced. "Of which point [infant baptism] and of sundry objections thereabout, I have treated (says he) the more largely, considering how great the error is in the denial thereof, and how greatly it spreadeth, both in these parts, and of late in our own country, that is England."†

In the work of Enoch Clapham, before mentioned, the Anabaptist is asked what religion he is of; and is made to answer, "Of the true religion, commonly termed Anabaptism, from our baptizing."—When he is asked concerning the church or congregation he was connected with in Holland; he answers, "There be certain English people of us that came out from the Brownists."—When the Arian says, I am of the mind that there is no true baptism upon earth; he replies, "I pray thee son, say not so: the congregation I am of, can and doth administer true baptism."—When an en-

* Crosby, vol. i. p. 88.

† Crosby, vol. i. p. 94.

Baptists return to England.

quirer after truth offers, upon his proving what he has said, to leave his old religion; the Anabaptist answers, "You may say, if God will give you grace to leave it; for it is a peculiar grace to leave Sodom and Egypt, spiritually so called." When the same person offers to join with them, and firmly betake himself to their faith; the Anabaptist replies, "The dew of heaven come upon you: to-morrow I will bring you into our sacred congregation, that so you may come to be informed in the faith, and after that be purely baptized."

This account being given by one who wrote against the Baptists, may be safely relied on, especially as he assures his reader, that the characters which he gives of each sect was not without sundry years experience had of them all.

Mr. Smyth, the pastor of the church at Amsterdam, was succeeded by Mr. Thomas Helwisse, who had been baptized by him, and was one of the persons who was excommunicated with him, on account of their objecting to the validity of infant baptism. He had fled with the Brownists to Holland, to escape persecution. While he continued with them he was esteemed a man of eminent faith, charity, and spiritual gifts. Though he had not the advantage of a learned education, he appears by his writings to have been a man of good natural parts, which had been improved by studious application.

Soon after the death of Mr. Smyth, Mr. Helwisse began to reflect upon the impropriety of his own conduct and that of the other English dissenters, in leaving their country and friends, and flying into a strange land to escape persecution. Thinking this might have arisen from fear and cowardice, he concluded they ought rather to bear a testimony to the truth in their own land, where it was in danger of being wholly extinguished; and to encourage their brethren, who were

Their number increases.

then suffering persecution for Christ's sake, to "hold fast the profession of their faith without wavering." He and his friends accordingly left Holland, and settled in London, where they continued their church state, and assembled for worship, as often, and as publicly, as the spirit of the times would permit. In a treatise written by Mr. Helwisse, entitled, *A short declaration, &c.* he justified their conduct by endeavouring to show in what cases it was unlawful to fly in times of persecution. This gave great offence to the puritans who were in exile, who in a work written against him by Mr. Robinson, charged him with "vain glory, and with courting persecution by challenging the king and the state to their faces, &c." How long Mr. Helwisse continued the elder of this church, Crosby says, he could not find, but that the books wrote against them show that they went on with great courage and resolution; and notwithstanding the severities used against them by the civil power, increased greatly in their number.*

Their intrepidity and danger may be judged of by the following circumstance. In the year 1614 the king, in order to show his zeal against heresy, took an opportunity to exercise it, by burning alive two of his subjects. These were Bartholomew Legate, who was charged with Arianism, and burnt in Smithfield, March 18, 1611; and Edward Wightman, a Baptist, of the town of Burton upon Trent, who was convicted Dec. 14, 1611, of divers heresies, before the Bishop of Litchfield and Coventry; and being delivered up to the secular power, was burnt at Litchfield on the 11th of April following.

Amongst other charges brought against him are these:—
"That the baptizing of infants is an abominable custom; that the Lord's supper and baptism are not to be celebrated

* Crosby, vol. i. 271. 272.

Edward Wightman burned.

as they are now practised in the church of England; and that Christianity is not wholly professed and preached in the church of England, but only in part." Who would have thought that a person would have been burnt by protestants for such opinions! Happily for our native country, this day of bigotry is past, and Edward Wightman was the last who suffered death in this way. It is rather a curious fact, that on the supposition of William Sautry, the Lollard, opposing infant baptism, which is highly probable, the baptists have had the honour of leading the van, and bringing up the rear of that part of the noble army of English martyrs, who have laid down their lives at the stake.

The persecution increased so much against the puritans, that in this year many of them left the country and fled to America. Amongst these were some Baptists, of whom honourable mention is made in Cotton Mather's History of America; but as the history of the baptists in that part of the world does not come within our design, we must refer the reader to their history, published in 3 vols. octavo, by the Rev. Isaac Backus, of New England.

There were however many who remained, for in 1615, the Baptists in England published a small treatise, entitled, *Persecution judged and condemned: in a discourse between an Antichristian and a Christian. Proving by the law of God and of the land, and by King James his many testimonies, that no man ought to be persecuted for his religion, so he testifie his allegiance by the oath appointed by law. Proving also, that the spiritual power in England, is the image of the spiritual cruel power of Rome, or that beast mentioned Rev. 13. Manifesting the fearful estate of those who are subject to such powers, that tyrannize over the conscience; and shewing the unlawfulness of flying because of the trouble men see or fear is coming upon them.*

Persecution condemned.

In this Piece they endeavoured to justify their separation from the church of England, and prove that every man has a right to judge for himself in matters of religion; and that to persecute on that account was illegal and anti-christian; contrary to the laws of God, as well as to several declarations of the king's majesty. They also assert their opinion respecting baptism, and show the invalidity of that baptism which was administered either in the established church or among the other dissenters, and clear themselves of several errors which had been unjustly imputed to them. It appears to have been approved by the whole body of Baptists who remained in England; for at the end of the preface they subscribe themselves "Christ's unworthy witnesses, his majesty's faithful subjects, commonly (but most falsely) called Anabaptists."

Though there is no name to this work, yet it is evidently the production of Mr. Helwisse and his friends. At the close of it they refer the reader to their confession published four years before, to form a judgment of their sentiments on the person of Christ; the lawfulness of magistrates, &c. &c. In the Epistle, "*to all that truly wish Jerusalem's prosperity, and Babylon's destruction,*" they say, "It cannot but with high thankfulness to God, and to the King, be acknowledged of all, that the King's Majesty is no blood-thirsty man, for if he were, bodily destruction should be the portion of all that fear God, and endeavour to walk in his ways; as may be seen in the primitive times of this spiritual power, or beast of England, after that King Henry the Eighth had cast off the Romish beast and since (so far as leave has been granted them) by hanging, burning, banishing, imprisoning, and what not, as the particulars might be named. Yet our most humble desire of our Lord the King is, that he would not give his power to force his faithful subjects to dis-

Sufferings of the Baptists.

semble, to believe as he believes, in the least measure of persecution; though it is no small persecution to lye many years in filthy prisons, in hunger, cold, idleness, divided from wife, family, calling, left in continual miseries and temptations, so as death would be to many less persecution; seeing his Majesty confesseth, that *to change the mind must be the work of God*. And of the Lord Bishops we desire, that they would a little leave off persecuting those that cannot believe as they, till they have proved that God is well pleased therewith, and the souls of such as submit are in safety from condemnation; let them prove this, and we protest we will for ever submit unto them, and so will thousands; and therefore if there be any spark of grace in them, let them set themselves to give satisfaction either by word or writing, or both. But if they will not but continue their cruel courses as they have done, let them yet remember that they must come to judgment, and have their abominations set in order before them, and be torn in pieces when none shall deliver them."

This work is a well written pamphlet of forty-eight quarto pages, in the form of a dialogue between a *Christian*, an *Antichristian*, and an *Indifferent person*. The principles of Dissenters and of the Baptists are clearly stated; and certainly proves that at this early period they were numerous and respectable; and had for many years been great sufferers, it should seem from the period of the reformation, from the manner in which they speak of the persecutions they had endured from the bishops of the church of England. It concludes by the Indifferent person saying, "Well, you will yet be called Anabaptists, because you deny baptism to infants." To which the Christian answers, "So were christians before us called sects; and so they may call *John Baptist*, Jesus Christ himself, and his apostles *Anabaptists*; for we

Baptists petition the King.

profess and practise no otherwise herein, than they, namely, *The baptizing of such as confess with the mouth the belief of the heart.* And if they be Anabaptists that deny baptism when God hath appointed it, they, and not we are Anabaptists. But the Lord give them repentance, that their sins may be put away, and never laid to their charge, even for his Christ's sake. Amen."*

Another book was published in 1618, vindicating the principles of the Baptists. This was translated from the Dutch, and is said by Dr. Wall and others to have been the first *printed* in the English language against the baptism of infants. Had it been said, the first book that was *published* in England it might have been true, on account of the great difficulty there was in publishing works against the established religion, but it is certain there were many books in English written and printed in vindication of the principles of the Baptists, several years before this period. Crosby says that he had not heard of this book being answered till thirty years afterward, when Mr. Thomas Cobbett, of New England, published a vindication of the right of infants to church-membership and baptism.

In 1620, the Baptists presented a humble supplication to the king when the parliament was sitting. This was dedicated, *To the high and mighty King, James, by the grace of God, King of Great Britain, France, and Ireland. To the Right Excellent and Noble Prince, Charles, Prince of Wales, &c. To all the Right Honourable Nobility, Grave and Honourable Judges, and to all other the Right Worshipful Gentry, of all estates and degrees, assembled in this present parliament. Right High and Mighty;—Right Excellent and Noble;—Right Honourable, and Right Worshipful.* In this,

* p. 48.

Loyalty of the Baptists.

they in the first place acknowledge their obligation to pray for Kings, and all that are in authority, and appeal to God that it was their constant practice so to do. They then set forth, that their miseries were not only the taking away of their goods, but also long and lingering imprisonments for many years in divers counties in England, in which many had died, leaving their widows and several small children behind them, and all because they durst not join in such worship as they thought contrary to the will of God.* After stating their sentiments, and challenging their enemies to accuse them of any disloyalty to his majesty, or of doing any injury to their neighbours, they conclude by praying for the king's majesty, for his royal highness the prince, and the honourable houses of parliament; calling God the searcher of hearts to witness that they were loyal subjects to his majesty, not for fear only, but also for conscience sake, subscribing themselves those who are unjustly called Anabaptists.†

This petition is divided into ten parts, and appears to be written with considerable ability. We can only give the titles of the chapters, but from these the contents may be judged of. 1. "The Rule of Faith is the doctrine of the Holy Ghost contained in the Sacred Scriptures, and not any church, council, Prince, or Potentate, nor any mortal man whatsoever. 2. The interpreter of this rule is the scriptures, and spirit of God in whomsoever. 3. That the Spirit of God, to understand and interpret the scriptures, is given to all and every particular person, that fear and obey God, of what degree soever they be; and not to the wicked. 4. Those that fear and obey God, and so have the spirit of God to search out and know the mind of God in the Scriptures, are commonly and for the most part, the simple, poor, despised, &c. 5. The

* p. 2.

† p. 26.

Extracts from writings of James I.

learned in human learning, do commonly and for the most part err, and know not the truth, but persecute it and the professors of it; and therefore are no farther to be followed than we see them agree with truth. 6. Persecution for conscience, is against the doctrine of Jesus Christ, King of Kings. 7. Persecution for conscience, is against the profession and practice of famous princes. 8. Persecution for cause of conscience, is condemned by the ancient and later writers, yea, by Puritans and Papists. 9. It is no prejudice to the commonwealth if freedom of religion were suffered, but would make it flourish. 10. Kings are not deprived of any power given them of God, when they maintain freedom for cause of conscience."

In the 7th chapter they thus remind the King of his own sentiments on this subject. "We beseech your Majesty we may relate your own worthy sayings, in your Majesty's speech to parliament, 1609. Your Highness saith, *It is a sure rule in divinity, that God never loves to plant his church by violence and blood-shed, &c.* And in your Highness's apology, p. 4, speaking of such papists as took the oath, thus: *I gave a good proof that I intended no persecution against them for conscience cause, but only desired to be secured for civil obedience, which for conscience cause they were bound to perform.* And page 60, speaking of Blackwel the Arch-Priest, your Majesty saith, *It was never my intention to lay any thing to the said Arch-Priest's charge, as I have never done to any for cause of conscience, &c.* And in your Highness's exposition on Rev. xx. printed 1588, and after 1603, your Majesty truly writeth thus: sixthly, *The compassing of the saints, and besieging of the beloved city, declareth unto us a certain note of a false church to be persecution; For they come to seek the*

Baptists numerous.

*faithful, the faithful are those that are sought: the wicked are the besiegers, the faithful be besieged.**

It is an awful consideration, that a Prince who so well understood the rights of conscience, and the distinction betwixt those duties which Christians owed to God, and those which they were bound to observe towards the civil power, should act so diametrically opposite to his sentiments. The uncommon intrepidity of the baptists, is evinced by their making this solemn appeal to the King and his parliament, at a time when they were exposed to all their resentments; and when, by their own principles, they were prevented from attempting to escape from the storm which threatened them.

This Petition was published in 1620, and the former pamphlet of 1615 reprinted with it. Both these were also reprinted in 1662, with the design, as stated in the title page, “for the establishing some and convincing others.”

From this also it appears that there were still Baptists *in many parts of the kingdom*; for this petition states that they had suffered imprisonment for “many years in divers counties in England.” We learn also by what has been written against them, that, notwithstanding all opposition, they kept up their separate meetings, and had many disciples who took joyfully the spoiling of their goods, endured cruel mockings, and probably scourgings also, yea, moreover bonds and imprisonments, rather than violate their consciences, or desert their principles.

We have further information respecting their numbers and principles, from a letter written by a person in London who had joined the Baptists, to his old friends, in which he defends his conduct and sentiments. This letter happening to fall into the hands of a member of the church of England, it was published with an answer annexed to it. As it discovers

* p. 20.

Letter of H. H.

something of the principles, and the spirit of the Baptists at that time, we shall give it entire for the gratification of our readers.

“ Beloved friends,

“ The ancient love that I have had towards you provoketh me to testify that I have not forgotten you, but am desirous still to shew my unfeigned love to you in any thing I may. I make no question but you have heard divers false reports of me, although among the same some truths; and that you may be truly informed of my state, I thought good to write a few words unto you, hoping that you will not speak evil of that which you know not, nor condemn a man unheard. The thing wherein I differ from the church of England is; they say at their washing or baptizing their infants, that they are members, of Christ's holy church, children of God, and inheritors of the kingdom of heaven. This I dare not believe; for the scriptures of God declare, that neither flesh nor the washing of flesh can save. Flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; for that which is born of the flesh is flesh, and we cannot enter into the kingdom of God except we be born again. They that have prerogative to be the sons of God, must be born of God, even believe in his name; and the washing of the filth of the flesh is not the baptism that saveth, but the answer of a good conscience towards God. If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature. The consequence of this is, that infants are not to be baptized, nor can they be christians, but such only who confess their faith as the scriptures teach.* There is neither command, example, nor just consequence for infant baptism, but for the baptizing of believers. There is besides of the church of God to be considered what it is: it will plainly appear that infants cannot be of it. They that know the language

* Matt. xxviii. 19. Mark xxi. 15. John i. 12. iii. 5. Gal. vi. 5. 1 Pet. iii. 21.

Letter of H. H.

from whence the word *church* is taken, can witness that it signifieth *a people called out*; and so the church of Christ is a company called out of their former state wherein they were by nature, out of Babylon, wherein they have been in spiritual bondage to the spiritual antichrist, and from having fellowship in spiritual worship with unbelievers and ungodly men. From all, whosoever cometh, they are fit timber for this spiritual building, which is a habitation of God by the Spirit, and the household of faith. Those who thus come out of nature's Egyptian bondage, and the fellowship of the children of Belial, being new creatures, and so holy brethren, are made God's house or church, through being knit together by the Spirit of God, and baptized into his body, which is the church. This being undeniably the church of Christ, infants cannot be of it; for they cannot be called out as afore said. Known wicked men cannot be of it, because they are not called out; nor antichrist's spiritual bondage cannot be of it, because that is a habitation of devils, and all God's people must go out of that.*

“What can be objected against this? Are not all the sons of God by faith? If any be in Christ, or a christian, must he not be a new creature? I pray you do not take up the usual objection which the antichristians have learned of the Jews: ‘What tellest thou us of being made christians only by faith in the Son, and so being made free? We are the children of Abraham, and of believers, and so are under the promise; *I will be the God of thee and of thy seed.* Thus are we and our children made free, whereas they neither do nor can believe in the Son.’

* Acts ii. 38, 41. viii. 12, 37. ix. 18. x. 47. xvi. 31. xviii. 8. xix. 3. 1 Cor. xiii. 13. 2 Cor. vi. 4. Gal. ii. 20. Eph. i. 22, 23. ii. 22. Heb. iii. 6. 1 Pet. i. 5. Rev. xviii. 2, 4.

Letter of H. H.

“ This is a Jewish antichristian fable : for Abraham had two sons, which were types of the two seeds, to which two covenants were made. The one born after the flesh, typing out the fleshly Israelites, which were the inhabitants of material Jerusalem, where was the material temple, and the performance of those carnal rites which endured to the time of reformation. The other by faith, typing out the children of the faith of Abraham, which are the inhabitants of the spiritual Jerusalem, the new testament state, in which is the spiritual temple, the church of the living God, and the performance of all those spiritual ordinances which Christ as prophet and king thereof hath appointed, and which remains and cannot be shaken or altered.*

“ Now if the old covenant be abolished, and all the appertainings thereof, as it is, being the similitude of heavenly things, even the covenant written in the book, the people, the tabernacle or temple, and all the ministering vessels, and a better covenant established upon better promises, and better temple and ministering vessels came instead thereof, procured and purchased by the blood of Jesus Christ, who is the new and living way ; let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, sprinkling our hearts from an evil conscience, and baptized in our bodies with pure water ; let us keep this profession of hope without wavering, and have no confidence in the flesh, to reap sanctification or justification thereby ; but let us cast it away as dung and dross, for if any might plead privilege of being the child of the faithful, the apostle Paul might, as he saith. (See Phil. iii.) But it was nothing till he had the righteousness of God through faith : then was he baptized into Jesus Christ for the remission of his sins.

* Gen. xvii. John viii. 3. Rom. iv. 8. 9. 2 Cor. v. 17. Gal. iii. 26. iv. 22. vi. 15. Heb. ix. 10. xii. 28.

Letter of H. H.

“ This covenant, which we as the children of Abraham challenge, is the covenant of life and salvation by Jesus Christ, made to all the children of Abraham, as it was made to Abraham himself, to them that believe in him who raised up Jesus the Lord from the dead. As also the children of the flesh are not **they**: they must be put out, and must not be heirs with the **faithful**. If they that are of the flesh be heirs, faith is made **void**, and the promise of none effect. Therefore it is by **faith**, that it might come of grace, and that the promise might be sure to all the seed that are of the faith of Abraham, who is the father of all the faithful. They are his children: the promise of salvation is not made with both Abraham’s seeds, but with his own seed, they that are of the faith of Abraham.*

“ These things may be strange to those who are strangers from the life of God, through the ignorance that is in them, because of the hardness of their hearts. God hath written them as the great things of his law, but they are counted by many as a strange thing. Yet wisdom is justified of all her children; and they that set their hearts to seek for wisdom as for silver, and search for her as for treasure, they shall see the righteousness of these things as the light, and the evidence of them as the noon day. They that be wise will try these things by the true touchstone of the holy scriptures, and leave off rejoicing in men to hang their faith and profession on them; the which I fear not to supplicate God day and night on behalf of you all. To whose gracious direction I commit you, with a remembrance of my hearty love to every one; desiring but this favour, that for requital I may receive your loving answer.

* Acts xiii. 26, 32, 39. Rom. iv. 14. ix. 8. Gal. iii. 7, 9, 29. iv. 30. Eph. iv. 28. Hosea viii. 12.

Description of the Baptists by J. P.

"Yours to be commanded always in any christian service.

"*London, May 10, 1622.* H. H."

The person who published this letter, replied to it in a work entitled, "*Anabaptist Mystery of Iniquity Unmasked, by J. P. 1623.*"

It will be recollected that this letter was not designed by the writer for publication. It was certainly ungenerous that a private letter on a controverted subject should be sent to the press by an opponent who intended to write against it, to unmask the iniquity it contained. But if the author could discover any iniquity in this letter, he must be very quick-sighted, as its declarations, however simply stated, are evidently founded on scripture testimony.

In the reply there is some information of consequence, for which we are obliged to the writer. He states, that the Baptists separated from the established church, wrote many books in defence of their principles, and had multitudes of disciples; that it was their custom to produce a great number of scriptures to prove their doctrines; that they were in appearance more holy than those of the established church; that they dissuaded their disciples from reading the churchmen's books, hearing in their assemblies, or conferring with their learned men. He adds, that they "denied the doctrine of predestination, reprobation, final perseverance, and other truths."* And says, "I suppose their *seeds* are sown among you not only by their *apostles*, but by their *books*." Of their holding these sentiments there is no proof given; but should it be true, it is probable that the Baptists at that period were principally General Baptists, who, as far as we have been able to decide, maintained sentiments very similar to those which were afterwards published by the famous Thomas Grantham.

* Crosby, vol. i. p. 133.

Death of James I.

In 1624 there appeared still greater champions of infant baptism. These were the famous Dod and Cleaver, who united their strength to oppose what they termed the erroneous positions of the Anabaptists. Their work was entitled, *The patrimony of christian children*. In the preface they apologize for their engaging in the controversy, by alleging that those of a contrary opinion were very industrious, and took great pains to propagate their doctrine; that divers persons of good note for piety had been prevailed upon by them; that several had intreated their help and assistance; and that they had been engaged already in private debates about this matter.

From these observations it appears that the Baptists had greatly increased in England in the reign of this king, during which every corrupt art was employed to extend the prerogative, and to oppress all those who had either wisdom or honesty to think for themselves.

In the beginning of 1625, the king died, after having by his folly and hypocrisy laid the foundation of all the calamities of his son's reign. He had been flattered by ambitious courtiers, as the Solomon and Phoenix of the age; but in the opinion of Bishop Burnet, "he was the scorn of the age; a mere pedant, without true judgment, courage, or steadfastness; his reign being a continued course of mean practices." Rapin says, "he was neither a sound protestant, nor a good catholic; but had formed a plan of uniting both churches, which must have effectually ruined the protestant interest, for which indeed he never expressed any real concern." Neal says, "I am rather of opinion that all his religion was his pretended *king-craft*. He was certainly the meanest prince that ever sat upon the British throne. England never sunk so low in its reputation, nor was so much exposed to the scorn and ridicule of its neighbours as in his reign."

Charles the first succeeds his Father.

CHAP. V.

A. D. 1625—1640.

CHARLES the first succeeded his father. Unhappily for this monarch, he had been educated in the principles of arbitrary power and religious bigotry. The conduct of James had been productive of general discontent, which his son did not take proper means to remove. Determined to be an absolute monarch, he drove his subjects into rebellion, and fell a victim to his own measures.

It was during this reign that an event took place among the Baptists, which has been commonly, but erroneously considered as the commencement of their history in this country. This was the formation of some churches in London, which many have supposed to be the first of this denomination in the kingdom. But could it even be proved that there were no distinct Baptist churches till this period, it would not follow that there were no Baptists, which however has been confidently stated. We have shown that persons professing similar sentiments with these of the present English Baptists, have been found in every period of the English church; and also that as early as the year 1509, from the testimony of Dr. Some, there were many churches of this description in London and in the country. During the reign of James, we have produced unexceptionable proof that there were great numbers of Baptists who suffered imprisonment in divers counties, and that a petition to the king was signed by many of their ministers. It is thought that the General Baptist

Particular baptist church in London.

church at Canterbury has existed for two hundred and fifty years, and that Joan Boucher, who was burnt in the reign of Edward the sixth, was a member of it. Though this is traditional only, yet it is rendered probable from her being a Baptist, and being always called "*Joan of Kent.*" It is also said that the church at Eyethorn in the same county has been founded more than two hundred and thirty years, and that pastors of the name of John Knott served it during two hundred years of that period.

It is rather singular that Crosby should pay so little attention to his materials as to overlook these circumstances, and to confirm the common error respecting the origin of the Baptist churches, by the following statement. "In the year 1633, (says he,) the Baptists, who had hitherto been intermixed with other protestant dissenters without distinction, and who consequently shared with the Puritans in the persecutions of those times, began to separate themselves, and form distinct societies of their own. Concerning the first of these, I find the following account collected from a manuscript of Mr. William Kiffin.

"There was a congregation of protestant dissenters of the Independent persuasion in London, gathered in the year 1616, of which Mr. Henry Jacob was the first pastor; and after him succeeded Mr. John Lathorp, who was their minister in 1633. In this society several persons, finding that the congregation kept not to its first principles of separation, and being also convinced that baptism was not to be administered to infants, but to such as professed faith in Christ, desired that they might be dismissed from that communion, and allowed to form a distinct congregation in such order as was most agreeable to their own sentiments.

"The church, considering that they were now grown very numerous, and so more than could in those times of persecu-

Mr. John Spilsbury first Pastor.

tion conveniently meet together, and believing also that those persons acted from a principle of conscience, and not from obstinacy, agreed to allow them the liberty they desired, and that they should be constituted a distinct church; which was performed Sep. 12. 1633. And as they believed that baptism was not rightly administered to infants, so they looked upon the baptism they had received at that age as invalid, whereupon most or all of them received a new baptism. Their minister was a Mr. John Spilsbury. What number they were is uncertain, because in the mentioning of about twenty men and women, it is added *with divers others*.

“In the year 1638, Mr. William Kiffin, Mr. Thomas Wilson, and others, being of the same judgment, were upon their request dismissed to the said Mr. Spilsbury’s congregation. In the year 1639, another congregation of Baptists was formed, whose place of meeting was in Crutched-friars; the chief promoters of which were Mr. Green, Mr. Paul Hobson, and Captain Spencer.”

The account of Mr. Spilsbury’s church is said in the margin to have been written from the records of that church; but from any thing that appears there is nothing to justify the conclusion of Crosby, that this was the *first* Baptist church; as the account relates simply to the origin of that particular church, to state which it is probable was Mr. Kiffin’s design, rather than to relate the origin of the Baptist churches in general, and which he must certainly have known were in existence previously to that period.

It must be admitted that there is some obscurity respecting the manner in which the ancient immersion of adults, which appears to have been discontinued, was restored, when, after the long night of antichristian apostacy, persons were at first baptized on a profession of faith. The very circum-

Immersion restored.

stance however of their being called *Anabaptists* as early as the period of the Reformation, proves that they did, in the opinion of the Pedobaptists, *re-baptize*, which it is not likely they would do, by pouring or sprinkling, immersion being incontrovertibly the universal practice in the church of England at that time.

It has not been uncommon for the enemies of the Baptists to reproach them with the manner in which this practice was restored. In a work published at the close of the seventeenth century by Mr. John Wall, entitled "Baptism anatomized," the writer says, "Their baptism is not from heaven, but will-worship, and so to be abhorred by all Christians; for they received their baptism from one Mr. Smyth who baptized himself; one who was cast out of a church, and endeavoured to deprive the church of Christ of the use of the bible."

To this charge, made with so much asperity, Hercules Collins, a Baptist minister at Wapping, replies with great indignation in a work entitled, "Believers' baptism from heaven, and of divine institution: Infant baptism from earth, and of human invention:" Published in 1691. Mr. Collins denies that the English Baptists received their baptism from Mr. John Smyth, and says, "It is absolutely untrue, it being well known to some who are yet alive how false this assertion is; and if J. W. will but give a meeting to any of us, and bring whom he please with him, we shall sufficiently shew the falsity of what is asserted by him in this matter, and in many other things which he hath unchristianly asserted."

It is to be regretted that Mr. Collins did not give the account which is here referred to. This defect is however in some measure supplied in a work published by Mr. Edward Hutchinson in 1676, entitled, "A Treatise concerning the

Baptist reformers.

covenant and baptism." The dedication is addressed "to the spiritual seed of Abraham, especially those of the *baptized* congregations." He says, "Your beginning in these nations (of late years) was but small; yet when it pleased the Lord to dispel those clouds that overshadowed us, and to scatter some beams of the gospel amongst us, he gave you so great an increase that Sion may say with admiration, Who hath begotten me these?"

"Nor is it less observable, that whereas other reformation have been carried on by the secular arm, and the countenance and allowance of the magistrate, as in Luther's time by several German princes; the protestant reformation in England by King Edward, Queen Elizabeth, &c.; and the Presbyterian reformation by a parliament, committee of estates, and assembly of divines, besides the favour and assistance of great personages; you have had none of these to take you by the hand; but your progress was against the impetuous current of human opposition, and attended with such external discouragements as bespeak your embracing this despised truth to be an effect of heart-sincerity, void of all mercenary considerations. Yea, how active has the accuser of the brethren been to represent you in such frightful figures, exposing you by that mischievous artifice to popular odium and the lash of the magistracy; insomuch that the name of an Anabaptist was crime enough, which doubtless was a heavy obstacle in the way of many pious souls!

"What our dissenting brethren have to answer on that account, who instead of taking up, have laid stumbling-blocks in the way of reformation, will appear another day. Yet notwithstanding the strenuous oppositions of those great and learned ones, the mighty God of Jacob hath taken you by the hand, and said, Be strong.

Principles of the Reformation.

“ Besides, it has a considerable tendency to the advancement of divine grace, if we consider the way and manner of the reviving of this costly truth. When the professors of these nations had been a long time wearied with the yoke of superstitious ceremonies, traditions of men, and corrupt mixtures in the work and service of God; it pleased the Lord to break these yokes, and by a very strong impulse of his Spirit on the hearts of his people to convince them of the necessity of reformation. Divers pious and very gracious people, having often sought the Lord by fasting and prayer that he would show them the pattern of his house, and the goings out and comings in thereof, resolved by the grace of God *not to receive or practise any piece of positive worship which had not precept nor example from the word of God.* Infant baptism coming of course under consideration, after long search and many debates it was found to have no footing in the scriptures, (the only rule and standard to try doctrines by,) but on the contrary a mere innovation, yea, the profanation of an ordinance of God. And though it was purposed to be laid aside, yet what fears, tremblings, and temptations, did attend them, lest they should be mistaken, considering how many learned and godly men were of an opposite persuasion! How gladly would they have had the rest of their brethren gone along with them! But when there was no hope, they concluded that a christian’s faith must not stand in the wisdom of men, and that every one must give an account of himself to God; and so resolved to practise according to their light. The great objection was the want of an Administrator, which as I have heard was removed by sending certain messengers to Holland, whence they were supplied. So that this little cloud of witnesses hath the Lord by his grace so greatly increased, that it is

Mr. Blount sent to Holland.

spread over our horizon, though opposed and contradicted by men of all sorts."

Crosby says that this agrees with an account given of the matter in an old manuscript said to be written by Mr. William Kiffin. This relates, that "several sober and pious persons belonging to the congregations of the dissenters about London were convinced that believers were the only proper subjects of baptism, and that it ought to be administered by immersion, or dipping the whole body into the water, in resemblance of a burial and resurrection, according to Rom. vi. 4, and Col. ii. 12. That they often met together to pray and confer about this matter, and consult what methods they should take to enjoy this ordinance in its primitive purity. That they could not be satisfied about any administrator in England to begin this practice; because, though some in this nation rejected the baptism of infants, yet they had not, as they knew of, revived the ancient custom of immersion. But hearing that some in the Netherlands practised it, they agreed to send over one Mr. Richard Blount, who understood the Dutch language; that he went accordingly, carrying letters of recommendation with him, and was kindly received both by the church there, and by Mr. John Batte their teacher; that on his return he baptized Mr. Samuel Blacklock, a minister, and these two baptized the rest of their company, whose names are in the manuscript to the number of fifty three."

"But the greatest number of the English Baptists, (says Crosby,) and the more judicious, esteemed all this but needless trouble, and what proceeded from the old popish doctrine of right to administer sacraments by an uninterrupted succession, which neither the church of Rome nor the church of England, much less the modern dissenters, could prove

Objections answered.

to be with them. They affirmed therefore, and practised accordingly, that after a general corruption of baptism, an unbaptized person might warrantably baptize, and so begin a reformation."

These testimonies to a matter of fact by such men as Hutchinson, Collins, and Kiffin, may be safely relied on, as they were all eminent Baptist ministers at a time when they could easily procure information from their aged members concerning it. At the time when Hutchinson and Collins wrote, Mr. Kiffin was still living; and from his perfect knowledge of all things in the denomination almost from the very first, he was doubtless one of the persons from whom they had received their information, and to whom Mr. Collins probably referred, who would give Mr. Wall every necessary information on the subject.

That Mr. Kiffin was well acquainted with this affair, there can be no doubt. He joined Mr. Lathorp's church very soon after the division had taken place in it, when he was about seventeen years of age; and five years afterwards was dismissed from it to Mr. Spilsbury's church, which was founded at Wapping.

It may perhaps be thought that this statement is incompatible with the history of the Baptists already given. What occasion, it may be objected, was there to send out of the kingdom a person to be baptized by immersion, if there were at the same time so many persons in it who had been baptized in the same manner? Might not one of them have been the administrator?

One answer to this objection is, that by violent persecutions almost all the Baptists had been driven out of the kingdom, so that in the beginning of the reign of Charles the first, it would have been a difficult matter to find a

Difficulties reconciled.

minister who had been baptized by immersion. The conjecture of Crosby however is very probable, that if such a one or many such could have been found, yet the old popish doctrine, not yet fully effaced from the mind even of nonconformists, that the right of administering the sacraments descended by uninterrupted succession, would prevent persons desiring baptism from applying to any but a regularly ordained minister, who had been baptized on a profession of faith by a person who had himself been so baptized. Such ministers were to be found in the Netherlands, whose baptism they thought, and perhaps with truth, had regularly descended from the Waldensian Christians, and therefore, it is not to be wondered at that they should apply to that quarter.

It is farther to be observed, that the account which Mr. Kiffin gives does not relate to the people who left Mr. Lathorp's church in 1633, and who settled at Wapping under the care of Mr. Spilsbury; but to "many sober and pious people belonging to the congregations of dissenters about London, who sent Mr. Blount to Holland, and were afterwards baptized by him and Mr. Samuel Blacklock, to the number of fifty-three." It is not known at what precise period this happened, but it is evident that these were not Mr. Spilsbury's people. Edwards, in his *Gangræna*, speaking of this church, associates with Mr. Blount the names of Emmes and Wrighters, as its ministers, and calls it "one of the first and prime churches of Anabaptists now in these latter times."

Still it may be asked, As Mr. Helwisse had formed a church in London prior to the year 1615, and had been baptized by Mr. Smyth, how was it that they did not receive baptism from him, or from his successors?

Cruelty of Laud.

To this it is replied, that the church of which Mr. Helwisse was pastor, was of the General Baptist denomination, and was composed of Arminians, whereas the persons desiring baptism were probably Calvinists, between which denominations there never was much fellowship or religious intercourse, nor is there to the present day. Admitting then that there were ministers of this description, it is not probable that Calvinists would repair to them for an administrator of baptism. But as we are told that the greater number of Baptists, and the more judicious of them, considered all this to be needless trouble, it is highly probable that this account refers to a few people, rather than to the Baptists in general.

These observations are made for the purpose of explaining and reconciling matters of fact which have been generally mistated, and not as an apology for the conduct of our predecessors; since the Baptists of the present day unite with the greater part, and the more judicious of that time, in maintaining, that after a general corruption of baptism, an unbaptized person may warrantably baptize, and so begin a reformation.

During the period of which we have been treating, the church of England was under the government of Archbishop Laud. This prelate, who wanted nothing but the name to constitute him a pope, manifested the most implacable and bigoted spirit towards the dissenters, and all who ventured to expose the pride and oppression of the ruling clergy. The sufferings of Prynne, Burton, and Bastwick, in 1633, are proofs of this assertion. The Star-chamber and High commission exceeded not only all the bounds of law and equity, but even of humanity itself. These gentlemen

High Commission Court.

being suspected of employing their time in prison in writing against the hierarchy, were cited a second time before the Star-chamber. Though the charges against them were not proved, and they were not permitted to speak in their defence, yet the following sentence was passed against them: "That Mr. Burton be deprived of his living, and degraded from his ministry (as Prynne and Bastwick had been from their professions of law and medicine;) that each of them be fined five thousand pounds; that they stand in the pillory at Westminster, and have their ears cut off;" and because Mr. Prynne had already lost his ears by sentence of the court, 1633, it was ordered that "the remainder of the stumps should be cut off, and that he should be stigmatized on both cheeks with the letters S. L.;" after which all three were to suffer confinement in the remotest prisons of the kingdom. This sentence was executed upon them June 30, 1637; the hangman rather sawing off the remainder of Prynne's ears than cutting them off. After this they were sent to the islands of Scilly, Guernsey, and Jersey, without pen, ink, or paper, or the access of friends: here they continued till released by the Long Parliament.

Mr. Lilburne, an eminent brewer in London, afterwards a colonel in the army, and the person to whom Mr. Kiffin was apprenticed, for refusing to take an oath to answer all interrogatories concerning his importing and publishing seditious libels, was fined five hundred pounds, and to be whipped through the streets from the Fleet to the pillory before Westminster-hall gate, April 8, 1638. While he was in the pillory, he uttered many bold and passionate speeches against the tyranny of the bishops, on which the court of Star-chamber, then sitting, ordered him to be gagged, which was done

Superstition of Laud.

accordingly; and when carried back to prison, it was ordered that he should be laid alone, with irons on his hands and legs, in the wards of the Fleet, where the basest of the prisoners were put, and that no person should be admitted to see him. Here he continued in a most forlorn and miserable condition till the meeting of the Long Parliament.

During this year many ministers were suspended and shut up in prison. Among these was a Mr. Brewer, a baptist minister, who lay in prison fourteen years.*

The approaches of Laud towards popery may be discovered from his superstitious conduct in consecrating the church of St. Catherine Cree, which had been lately repaired. On a sabbath morning, the bishop, attended by several of the High commission and some civilians, approaching to the west door of the church, which was shut, and guarded by haldberdeers, some who were appointed for that purpose cried with a loud voice, "Open, open, ye everlasting doors, that the king of glory may come in!" Presently the doors being opened, the bishop with some doctors and principal men entered. As soon as they were come within the place, his lordship fell down on his knees, and with eyes lifted up and his arms spread abroad, said, "This place is holy: the ground is holy! In the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, I pronounce it holy!" Then walking up the middle aisle towards the chancel, he took up some of the dust and threw it in the air several times. When he approached near the rail of the communion table, he bowed towards it five or six times; and returning, went round the church with his attendants in procession, saying first the hundredth, and then the nineteenth psalm, as prescribed in the Roman pontifical. He then read several collects, in one of

* Neal, vol. ii. p. 329.

St. Catherine Cree Church.

which he prayed God to accept of that beautiful building; and he concluded thus—"We consecrate this church, and separate it unto thee as holy ground, not to be profaned any more to common use." In another he prayed "that all who should hereafter be buried within the circuit of this holy and sacred place may rest in their sepulchres in peace, till Christ's coming to judgment, and may then rise to eternal life and happiness." After this the bishop, sitting under a cloth of state in the aisle of the church near the communion table, took a written book in his hand, and pronounced curses upon those who should hereafter profane that holy place by musters of soldiers, or keeping profane law-courts, or carrying burdens through it; and at the end of every curse, he bowed to the east, and said, "Let all the people say amen!" When the curses were ended, which were about twenty, he pronounced a like number of blessings upon all that had any hand in framing and building that beautiful church, and on those who had given or should hereafter give any chalices, plate, ornaments, or other utensils; and at the end of every blessing he bowed to the east, and said, "Let all the people say amen!" After this followed the sermon, and then the sacrament, which the bishop consecrated and administered after the following manner.

As he approached the altar, he made five or six low bows; and coming to the side of it, where the bread and wine were covered, he bowed seven times. Then after reading many prayers, he came near the bread, and gently lifting up the corner of the napkin, beheld it; and immediately letting fall the napkin, he retreated hastily a step or two, and made three low obeisances. His lordship then advanced; and having uncovered the bread, bowed three times as before. Then he laid his hand on the cup which was full of wine,

Convocation of the Clergy.

with a cover upon it, which having let go, he stepped back, and bowed three times towards it: he then came near again, and lifting up the cover of the cup, looked into it; and seeing the wine, he let fall the cover again, retired back, and bowed as before. Then the elements were consecrated; and the bislop having first received, gave it to some principal men in their surplices, hoods, and tippets: after this, many prayers being said, the solemnity of the consecration ended.

The pride of the clergy at this time grew to such a pitch, that in the year 1636, a member of the House of Commons said, that "the clergy were so exalted, that a gentleman might not come near the tail of their mules; and that one of them had declared openly, that he hoped to see the day when a clergyman should be as good a man as any upstart jack gentleman in the kingdom."

The church had now reached the summit of its height and splendour, and was determined on crushing all who dissented from the establishment. In the convocation, which was held in 1640, with more pomp than the troublesome situation of the time justified, seventeen canons were published June 30, which were entitled, "Constitutions and canons ecclesiastical, created upon by the archbishops of Canterbury and York, preidents of the convocation for their respective provinces, and the rest of the bishops and clergy of those provinces, and agreed upon by the King's majesty's licence, in their severa synods begun at London and York, 1640."

Under the pretext of discouraging popery, but evidently with the design of crushing the dissenters, it was enacted, that "all ecclesiastical persons within their several parishes and jurisdictions shall confer privately with popish recusants; but if private conference prevail not, the church must and

Articles against Dissenters.

shall come to her censures; and to make way for them, such persons shall be presented at the next visitation who come not to church, and refuse to receive the holy eucharist, or who either hear or say mass; and if they remain obstinate after citation, they shall be excommunicated. But if neither conference nor censures prevail, the church shall then complain of them to the civil power, and this sacred synod does earnestly intreat the reverend justices of assize to be careful in executing the laws as they will answer it to God.

“The synod further declares, that the canon abovementioned against papists shall be in full force against all Anabaptists, Brownists, Separatists, and other sectaries, as far as they are applicable.”*

From this sketch of the history of this period, we may form a tolerable idea of the difficulties which attended the meetings of the Dissenters. It certainly shows also the zeal of those excellent men who were willing to risk all the horrors of excommunication, rather than not meet to worship God in a way which they considered agreeable to his holy word. There is no doubt but many of the Baptists suffered persecution at this time. We have an account of one who was a celebrated preacher amongst them, who was excommunicated for refusing to attend the parish churches, and who doubtless remained obstinate, as this canon denominates those who were honest enough to resist its decrees. This was Samuel Howe, otherwise called Cobbler Howe, who, dying while he was under the sentence of excommunication, was refused Christian burial. The history of this excellent man will be more fully related in the next chapter, which will record great alterations both in church and state. Nor will this appear surprising when the superstition, bigotry,

* Neal, vol. ii. p. 348, 349.

Origin of the Civil War.

cruelty, and tyranny of the ruling parties are considered. *Oppression*, which Solomon says *makes a wise man mad*, drove the people into rebellion, and produced all its natural and terrible consequences.

CHAP. VI.

A. D. 1640—1653.

AT the period to which we have brought our history, very serious disturbances existed between the king and his parliament. These soon after broke out into a civil war, which continued many years, and ended in the death of the king, the overthrow of the constitution, the subversion of episcopacy, and the establishment of presbytery.

It may reasonably be supposed, that such a state of things would be favourable to the dissemination of those principles by which the different denominations of dissenters were distinguished. Delivered from the oppressive measures of arbitrary monarchs and persecuting bishops, they would hail the dawn of liberty; and not knowing which party would ultimately prevail, would exert themselves while it was in their power.

In 1641, the oppressive and cruel measures of the High commission court and the Star-chamber were terminated by an act of parliament; and thus were destroyed the two chief engines of the late arbitrary proceedings both in church and state, which had been the occasion of ruining the liberties and estates of many religious families.

The zeal and increase of the Baptists at that time, have excited the attention of ecclesiastical historians. Mr. Fuller

Dissenters interrupted in Southwark.

says, "On Jan. 18, 1641, happened the first fruits of Anabaptistical insolence, when eighty of that sect meeting at a house in St. Saviour's, Southwark, preached that the statute in the 35th of Elizabeth, for the administration of common prayer, was no good law, because made by bishops; that the king cannot make a good law, because not perfectly regenerate, and that he was only to be obeyed in civil matters. Being brought before the lords, they confessed the articles; but no penalty was inflicted on them."

Crosby says, that this is a very imperfect account, and he relates the matter thus: "It was not an Anabaptist, but an Independent congregation, though it is probable there were some baptists among them."

"They met in Deadman's place, and their pastor at that time was Mr. Stephen More. Being assembled on the Lord's day for religious worship, though not with their former secrecy, they were discovered and taken, and committed to the Clink prison, by Sir John Lenthall, marshal of the King's bench.

"The next morning, six or seven of the men were taken before the house of lords. Fuller says, they were charged with having preached against the King's supremacy in ecclesiastical matters, and against the statute of the 35th of Elizabeth, which establishes the common prayer, and forbids assembling for religious worship where it is not used.

"The lords examined them strictly concerning their principles, when they freely acknowledged that they owned no other head of the church but Jesus Christ; that no prince had power to make laws that were binding on the conscience; and that laws made contrary to the laws of God were of no force.

Peers attend the Meeting.

“As things now stood, the lords could not discountenance these principles; and therefore, instead of inflicting any penalty, they treated them with a great deal of respect and civility, and some of the house enquired where the place of their meeting was, and intimated that they would come and hear them. Accordingly three or four of the peers did go to the meeting on the next Lord’s day, to the great surprise and wonder of many.

“The people went on in their usual method, having two sermons; in both of which they treated of those principles for which they had been accused, founding their discourses on the words of our Saviour: *All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth.* After this, they received the Lord’s supper, and then made a collection for the poor, to which the lords contributed liberally with them. At their departure they signified their satisfaction in what they had heard and seen, and their inclination to come again. But this made so much noise, that they durst not venture a second time.”

If this was not a Baptist church, there had been a Baptist minister before this time as its pastor. This was the celebrated Samuel Howe, who succeeded Mr. John Canne, the famous author of the marginal notes to the bible. While Mr. Howe was the pastor of the church, they were persecuted beyond measure by the clergy and bishops’ courts. Dying while he lay under sentence of excommunication, Christian burial was denied him, and a constable’s guard secured the parish church of Shoreditch to prevent his being buried there. At length he was buried in Agnes-la-clair. In a work published this year, 1641, entitled “The Brownists’ Synagogue,” it is said, “Of these opinions was Howe, that notorious predicant cobbler, whose body was buried in the

* Crosby, vol. i. p. 162, 163.

Funeral of Mr. Howe.

highway, and his funeral sermon preached by one of his sect in a brewer's cart." From this it appears that his funeral was public, notwithstanding the violence of the times, and that his people took this method of pouring contempt upon the impotent rage of his persecutors, whose sentiments concerning Christian burial and consecrated ground they despised; and to prove that this was from principle, and not merely from necessity, many of the members of the church afterwards desired to be buried there also.

Mr. Neal says, that Mr. Howe was a man of learning, and published a small treatise, entitled, "The sufficiency of the Spirit's teaching." This however does not appear from the work, which is designed to show the insufficiency of human learning to the purposes of religion; and not only so, but that it is dangerous and hurtful. It is certainly written with great strength of genius, though the author was a "cobbler," which appears from the following extract from some commendatory lines prefixed to the discourse.—

"What *How*? how now? Hath *How* such learning found,
To throw Art's curious image to the ground?
Cambridge, and Oxford, may their glory now
Veil to a Cobbler, if they know but *How*."

The following honourable testimony is borne to the character of Mr. Howe by Mr. Roger Williams, of Providence, in New England, in a work entitled, "The Hireling Ministry none of Christ's," printed in London in the second month, 1552. "Amongst so many instances, (says he) dead and living, to the everlasting praise of Christ Jesus, and of his Holy Spirit, breathing and blessing where he listeth, I cannot but with honourable testimony remember that eminent

Disturbance in Fleet Street.

christian witness, and prophet of Christ, even that despised and yet beloved Samuel Howe, who being by calling a cobbler, and without human learning, (which yet in its sphere and place he honoured) who yet I say, by searching the holy scriptures, grew so excellent a textuary, or scripture-learned man, that few of those high Rabbies that scorn to mend or make a shoe, could aptly or readily, from the holy scriptures, out-go him. And however (through the oppressions upon some men's consciences even in life and death, and after death, in respect of burying, as yet unthought and unremedied,) I say, however he was forced to seek a grave or bed in the highway, yet was his life, and death, and burial, (being attended with many hundreds of God's people) honourable and (how much more on his rising again!) glorious."*

At this period the Baptists began to increase very rapidly. Taking advantage of the liberty which the confusion of the times, if not the disposition of the rulers, gave them, they were not backward in asserting and vindicating their sentiments both by preaching and writing, and also by public disputations. Their courage seems to have greatly provoked their adversaries, who wrote many pamphlets against them. From one of these, published in this year, we have derived some curious information, from which it appears that another Baptist church was formed in Fleet street, by the zeal of Mr. Praise-God Barebone, a person who was afterwards of such celebrity, that he gave the name to one of Oliver Cromwell's parliaments, which was called by way of contempt, *Barebone's Parliament*.

It appears from a manuscript which Crosby possessed, that the church of which Mr. Howe was pastor, after his

* Page 11, 12.

Mr. Praise-God Barebone.

death chose Mr. More, a layman and citizen of London, and a person of considerable property, in whose time the affair mentioned by Fuller took place. For some cause this church divided by mutual consent, and that just half was with Mr. P. Barebone, and the other half with Mr. Henry Jessey.* From this circumstance it is probable that this was a Baptist church which admitted of mixed communion; for as Mr. Jessey had not yet been baptized, it is likely the Pædobaptists joined with him, and the Baptists with Mr. P. Barebone. Crosby says, he knew not whether Mr. John Canne was a Baptist or not, though he found his name in a manuscript list among the gentlemen who left the established church to join the Baptists.† The probability is that he was a Baptist, and that on his leaving England to go to Holland, Mr. Howe succeeded him as the pastor of this church, which Fuller calls a congregation of Anabaptists.

It is a matter of regret that we have not a more particular account of this excellent man. It is likely he never returned from Holland whither he was driven by the severity of the times. Neal says, that "he became pastor of the Brownist congregation at Amsterdam."‡ In this he was doubtless correct, though mistaken in other matters concerning him. We learn from another writer, that he was much followed at Amsterdam by those puritans who visited Holland at that time for the purposes of trade. "You never," says he, "go to Master Herring's, (a good old nonconformist) but have gone to Master Canne's (the separatist) and to his church." He adds, that he had received a letter from a person in Holland, who said, "For their going to the Brownists, and

* Crosby, vol. iii. p. 42. † Ibid. vol. iii. p. 38.

‡ Neal, vol. ii. p. 392.

New Preachers very popular.

conversing with Master Canne more than us ; that is undeniable. What you may of this read, in an Epistle to the Rejoinder in defence of Master Bradshaw against Master Canne, is most true and certain.*

The pamphlet we have referred to is entitled, *New preachers, New.*—"Greene the felt-maker, Spencer the horse-rubber, Quartermine the brewer's clerk, and some few others, who are mighty sticklers in this new kind of talking trade, which many ignorant coxcombs call preaching. Whereunto is added the last tumult in Fleet-street, raised by the disorderly preaching, pratings, and pratlings of Mr. Barebones the leather-seller, and Mr. Greene the felt-maker, on Sunday last the 19th of December."

The tumult alluded to is thus described: "A brief touch in memory of the fiery zeal of Mr. Barebones, a reverend, unlearned leather-seller, who with Mr. Greene the felt-maker, were both taken preaching or prating in a conventicle, amongst a hundred persons ; on Sunday, the 19th of December last, 1641.

"After my commendations, Mr. Rawbones (Barebones I should have said), in acknowledgment of your too much troubling yourself, and molesting of others, I have made bold to relate briefly your last Sunday's afternoon work, lest in time your meritorious pains-taking should be forgotten, (for the which you and your associate Mr. Greene, do well deserve to have your heads in the custody of young Gregory, to make buttons for hempen loops,) you two having the Spirit so full, that you must either vent, or burst, did on the sabbath aforesaid, at your house near Fetter lane end, in Fleet street, at the sign of the Lock and Key, there and then did you and your consort (by turns) unlock most delicate

* Edwards's Answer to Arlogoet. Narration, p. 48.

Mr. Barebone.

strange doctrine, where were about thousands of people, of which number the most ignorant applauded your preaching, and those that understood any thing derided your ignorant prating. But after four hours long and tedious tatling, the house where you were was beleaguered with multitudes that thought it fit to rouse you out of your blind devotion, so that your walls were battered, your windows all fractions, torn into rattling shivers, and worse the hurly-burly might have been, but that sundry constables came in with strong guards of men to keep the peace, in which conflict your sign was beaten down and unhanged, to make room for the owner to supply the place ; all which shows had never been, had Mr. Greene and Mr. Barebones been content (as they should have done) to have gone to their own parish churches. Also on the same day a mad rustic fellow (who is called the Prophet Hunt) did his best to raise the like strife and trouble in St. Sepulchre's church. Consider and avoid these disorders, good reader."

This is certainly a proof that these *new preachers* excited great attention, and were so very popular as to draw thousands after them. The tumult was occasioned by the opposition that was raised by "certain lewd fellows of the baser sort." It is not said whether the preachers and a hundred of the people were taken by the constables to preserve them from the fury of the mob, or to bring them to justice. Had the latter been the case, and they had suffered any thing for their conduct, it is highly probable this writer would have mentioned it. It is likely that this affair ended in the same manner as that which Fuller relates, and that as things now stood, the lords could not discountenance such principles.

In the epistle to Mr. Greene, the writer says, "Do not these things come from proud spirits, that he [Mr. Spencer]

Mr. Greene.

a horse-keeper, and you a hat-maker, will take upon you to be ambassadors of God, to teach your teachers, and take upon you to be ministers of the gospel in these days of light. Consider, I pray you, that our Lord would not have had the ass (Matt. xxi. 3.) if he had not stood in need of him. Now the truth is, the church hath no need of such as you, an unlearned self-conceited hat-maker. It is true that in the beginning of Queen Elizabeth's reign the popish priests and friars being dismissed, there was a scarcity for the present of learned men, and so some tradesmen were permitted to leave their trades, and betake themselves to the ministry; but it was necessity that did then constrain them so to do; but thanks be to God, we have now no such necessity, and therefore this practice of you and your comrades casts an ill aspersion upon our good God, that doth furnish our church plentifully with learned men; and it doth also scandalize our church, as if we stood in need of such as you to preach the gospel.—This you call preaching, or prophesying; and thus as one of them told the lords of the parliament that they were all preachers, for so they practise and exercise themselves as young players do in private, till they be by their brethren judged fit for the pulpit, and then up they go, and like mountebanks play their part.—Mr. Greene, Mr. Greene, leave off these ways; bring home such as you have caused to stray. It is such as you that vent their venom against our godly preachers, and the divine forms of prayers, yea, against all set forms of prayers, all is from Antichrist, but that which you preach is most divine, *that* comes fresh from the Spirit, the other is an old dead sacrifice, composed (I should have said killed) so long ago that now it stinks. It is so that in the year 1549, it was compiled by Doctor Cranmer, Doctor Goodricke, Doctor

Brownists' Synagogues discovered.

Skip, Doctor Thrilby, Doctor Day, Doctor Holbecke, Doctor Ridley, Doctor Cox, Doctor Tailor, Doctor Haines, Doctor Redman, and Mr. Robinson, Archdeane of Leicester; but what are all these? they are not to be compared to John Greene, a hat-maker, for he thinketh what he blustereth forth upon the sudden is far better than that which these did maturely and deliberately compose."

We have been the more particular in giving extracts from this work, as it gives a tolerably correct idea of the doctrines which the Baptists preached, and the manner in which they conducted their public services. It is not at all wonderful that, when the church had lost its power to persecute, those who still possessed the spirit of persecution should indulge in defamation and ridicule.

There was another quarto pamphlet of six pages, published in 1641, relating chiefly, if not entirely, to the Baptists, which has the following title: "The Brownists' Synagogue; or a late discovery of their conventicles, assemblies, and places of meeting; where they preach, and the manner of their praying and preaching; with a relation of the names, places, and doctrines of those which do commonly preach. The chief of which are these:—Greene, the Feltmaker; Marler, the Buttonmaker; Spencer, the Coachman; Rogers, the Glover. Which sect is much increased of late within this city. A kingdom divided cannot stand."—In this work, Greene and Spencer (whom we have mentioned as ministers of a congregation in Crutched Friars) are called the two arch-separatists, and are said to be "accounted as demi-gods, who were here and every where." This silly piece concludes by showing the manner of their assembling, which we extract because it gives some idea of the spirit of the times, and also to prove that the voice of

Baptist Meeting in Bishopsgate Street.

slander, could not attribute any improper conduct to them in their public meetings. "In the house where they meet there is one appointed to keep the door, for the intent to give notice, if there should be any insurrection, warning may be given them. They do not flock together, but come two or three in a company; and all being gathered together, the man appointed to teach, stands in the midst of the room, and his audience gather about him. The man prayeth about the space of half an hour; and part of his prayer is, that those which come thither to scoff and laugh, God would be pleased to turn their hearts, by which means they think to escape undiscovered. His sermon is about the space of an hour, and then doth another stand up to make the text more plain; and at the latter end he entreats them all to go home severally, lest the next meeting they should be interrupted by those which are of the opinion of the wicked. They seem very steadfast in their opinions, and say, rather than turn, they will burn."

In this year was published a small piece in favour of immersion, entitled, "A treatise of Baptism, or dipping; wherein is clearly showed that our Lord Christ ordained dipping, and that sprinkling of children is not according to Christ's institution; and also the invalidity of those arguments which are commonly brought to justify that practice." The author of this was Mr. Edward Barber, who was the minister of a congregation of Baptists in London, meeting in the Spittle, Bishopsgate street, where, it is said, "he gathered a numerous congregation, and was the means of convincing many that infant baptism had no foundation in scripture." Edwards, in his *Gangræna*, speaks of a minister named Bacon, who had been forced to leave Gloucestershire, "but here in London had been entertained in the house of a great

Mr. Barber imprisoned.

man, one Barber, an Anabaptist, about Threadneedle street.*

Though the parliament had decreed, at the abolition of the before-mentioned ecclesiastical courts, "that no courts should be erected with the like powers in future," yet the spirit of persecution was not eradicated from the minds of those in authority. Mr. Barber had no sooner published his piece than he was made to feel the weight of their high displeasure, and was committed to prison for eleven months. The church over which he was pastor, was the first that practised the laying on of hands on baptized believers. He was a learned man, had been a clergyman in the established church, and died before the Restoration.

There was another work printed in London, 1642, entitled, "The vanity of childish baptism; wherein is proved that baptism is dipping, and dipping baptism." The writer signs himself A. R. Who he was we are not informed; but his work is frequently quoted by Dr. Featly, who charges him with saying, "They that have the administration of baptism without dipping, have not the baptism of the new testament." And farther, "The word baptize is derived from βαπτο signifying to dip or dye; and therefore washing or sprinkling is not baptism, but plunging the body, or at least the head in water." Also, "The administration of baptism which hath no express command in scripture, and which overthrows or prevents the administration of baptism which is expressly commanded in scripture, is a mere device of man's brain, and no baptism of Christ. But the administration of baptism to infants hath no express command in scripture, and it overthrows or prevents the administration of baptism upon disciples or believers, which is expressly commanded: therefore

Dispute in Southwark.

the baptism of infants is a mere device of man's brain, and no baptism of Christ." Matt. xxviii. 19. Mark xvi. 16. John iv. 1, 2. Acts ii. 38. viii. 39.

On October 17, a famous dispute took place between Dr. Featley and four Baptists somewhere in Southwark, at which were present Sir John Lenthall, and many others. The Doctor published his disputation in 1644, and tells us in his preface that he could hardly dip his pen in any other liquor than that of the juice of gall: it is therefore no wonder that it is so full of bitterness. He calls the Baptists—(1.) An illiterate and sottish sect — (2.) A lying and blasphemous sect — (3.) An impure and carnal sect — (4.) A bloody and cruel sect — (5.) A profane and sacrilegious sect — (6.) Describes the fearful judgments of God inflicted upon the ringleaders of that sect.—This work is entitled, "The Dippers dipt, or the Anabaptists ducked and plunged over head and ears at a disputation in Southwark;" and is dedicated "To the most noble lords, with the honourable knights, citizens and burgesses, now assembled in parliament." It is peculiarly gratifying that the doctor, with all his malignancy, is not able to exhibit any charges against them, except what have been commonly but erroneously alledged against the Baptists in Germany: the disturbances at Munster being no more the effect of the principles of the Baptists, than the riots of London were that of Protestants, or those in Birmingham of Episcopalians.

The doctor speaks very contemptuously of his opponents.—He calls one of them a brewer's clerk: no doubt this was Mr. Kiffin, who had been an apprentice to the famous republican John Lilburn, of turbulent memory. He it was too, it is probable, who is called Quartermine the brewer's clerk, in the pamphlet entitled, *New Preachers, New*.

Bitter spirit of Doctor Featley.

The dispute commenced, he tells us, by one of the Baptists saying, "Master doctor, we come to dispute with you at this time, not for contention sake, but to receive satisfaction. We hold that the baptism of infants cannot be proved lawful by the testimony of scripture, or by apostolical tradition. If therefore you can prove the same either way, we shall be willing to submit to you."

Instead of attempting the proof of what they required, the doctor insults them as "Anabaptists, heretics, mechanics, and illiterate men; by whose habit he could judge they were not fit to dispute: besides, they could not dispute from authority, as they knew not the original, nor understood how to argue syllogistically in mood and figure."

The persecuting spirit of Dr. Featley may be discovered from the following paragraph in the epistle to the reader: "This fire (says he) which in the reigns of Queen Elizabeth and King James, and our gracious sovereign [Charles i.] till now was covered in England under the ashes; or if it brake out at any time, by the care of the ecclesiastical and civil magistrates it was soon put out. But of late, since the unhappy distractions which our sins have brought upon us, the temporal sword being otherways employed, and the spiritual locked up fast in the scabbard, this sect among others hath so far presumed upon the patience of the state, that it hath held weekly conventicles, re-baptized hundreds of men and women together in the twilight, in rivulets, and some arms of the Thames, and elsewhere, dipping them over head and ears. It hath printed divers pamphlets in defence of their heresy, yea, and challenged some of our preachers to disputation. Now although my bent hath been always hitherto against the most dangerous enemy of our church and state, the jesuit, to extinguish such balls of wildfire as they have cast into the

Doctor Featley imprisoned.

bosom of our church; yet seeing this strange fire kindled in the neighbouring parishes, and many Nadabs and Abihus offering it on God's altar, I thought it my duty to cast the water of Siloam upon it to extinguish it."

We had intended to have given some considerable extracts from this work for the information of the readers; but the ridiculous pedantry and scurrilous abuse with which it abounds is so disgusting, that we have chosen rather to refer them to the work itself, which is not yet very scarce, as there were six editions of it printed in six years;—a shocking proof of the vulgarity and illiberality of the age!

It is worthy of remark, that this sect had, he says, thrust out its sting near the place of his residence for "upwards of twenty years." From his residing at Lambeth, it is likely he refers to the church in Southwark mentioned by Fuller, which Crosby says, was constituted about the year 1621; of which Mr. Hubbard, or Herbert, a learned man of episcopal ordination, was the pastor. He was succeeded by Mr. John Canne who, it appears from the records of the church in Broadmead, Bristol, was a Baptist, and the first person who preached the doctrine of believers' baptism in that city.

Perhaps some little allowance may be made for the doctor's ill temper, from the circumstance of his being a prisoner when he wrote it. Being a member of the assembly of Divines, and having held a correspondence with the king at Oxford, he was sent to Lord Petre's house in Aldersgate street as a spy. It so happened that Mr. Henry Denne, a Baptist, was imprisoned there at the same time for preaching against infant baptism, and presuming to re-baptize some persons in Cambridgeshire.

No sooner was Mr. Denne in his apartment, but the doctor's book was laid before him, which after he had read,

Replies to Doctor Featly's Book.

considering himself called upon to defend the principles therein opposed, and for which he was then suffering, he sent for the doctor, and offered to dispute the subject with him, which he accepted; but after debating the first argument, he declined the contest, alledging that it was not lawful to dispute without licence from the government; but wished Mr. Denne to write on the subject, engaging himself to defend infant baptism.

Mr. Denne wrote an answer which he published under the title of *Antichrist unmasked*, and dated it from prison, Feb. 22, 1644. The doctor's work, before mentioned, was dated Jan. 10, 1644. He was also answered by Mr. Samuel Richardson, in a work entitled *Brief considerations on Dr. Featley's book*, to neither of which he replied.

One of the pamphlets, which the doctor says had been printed in defence of this heresy, was written by Mr. Francis Cornwell, M. A. This was published in 1643, and was entitled *The vindication of the royal commission of King Jesus*. It was dedicated to the House of Commons, and given away at the doors of the house to several of its members. The doctor calls this "a bold libel, which was offered to hundreds, and in which the brazen-faced author blusheth not to brand all the reformed churches, and the whole Christian world at this day which christen their children, and sign them with the seal of the covenant, with the odious name of the antichristian faction."

In 1645, an ordinance of parliament was passed, enacting, "That no person should be permitted to preach, who is not ordained a minister in this [the presbyterian] or some other reformed church, and it is earnestly desired that Sir Thomas Fairfax take care that this ordinance be put in execution in

Bigotry of the Presbyterians.

the army." Probably the Baptist ministers were much interrupted by this law, as it might be doubted whether (according to the opinion of the Presbyterians) they had been legally ordained. There is no doubt however but this act was passed in consequence of the violent declamations of many of the Presbyterian ministers against tolerating the sectaries, as they called the Baptists and Independents, against whom it appears to have been principally directed.

In order to expose the principles of these misguided men, we shall insert a few extracts from their printed works. In a sermon preached before the House of Commons by Dr. Calamy, Oct. 22, 1644, it is said, "If you do not labour according to your duty and power to suppress the errors and heresies that are spread in the kingdom, all these errors are your errors, and these heresies are your heresies: they are your sins, and God calls for a parliamentary repentance from you for them this day. You are the Anabaptists, you are the Antinomians, and it is you that hold all religions should be tolerated."

In a sermon by Dr. Burgess, addressed to the parliament, April 30, 1645, after admonishing them to beware of all compliances with, and indulgences of, all sorts of sects and schisms then pleaded for, he adds, "And is it persecution and antichristianism to engage all to *unity* and *uniformity*? Doth Paul bid the Philippians beware of the concision? Doth he beseech the Romans to mark those that cause divisions and offences, contrary to the doctrines they have received, and avoid them? Doth he in writing to the Galatians wish, "I would they were even cut off that trouble you?" And is it such an heinous offence now for the faithful servants of Christ to advise you to the same course? Good heavens!"

Bigotry of the Presbyterians.

Even Mr. Richard Baxter, though more moderate than many, yet, when speaking against the Baptists in his work entitled, *Plain scripture proof of infant church membership and baptism*, says, "The divisions and havock of the church is our calamity: we intended not to dig down the banks or pull up the hedge, and lay all waste and common, when we desired the prelates' tyranny might cease. My judgment in that much disputed point of liberty or religion, I have always freely made known. I abhor unlimited liberty and toleration of all, and think myself easily able to prove the wickedness of it."

Mr. Prynne, in his *Answer to John Goodwin*, says, "If the parliament and synod shall by public consent establish a presbyterial church-government as most consonant to God's word, Independents and all others are bound in conscience to submit unto it, under the pain of obstinacy, singularity, &c."

Mr. Edwards, lecturer of Christ Church, and the famous author of *Gangrana*, tells the magistrates that "they should execute some exemplary punishment upon some of the most notorious sectaries and seducers, and upon the wilful abettors of these abominable errors, namely, the printers, dispersers, and licencers, and set themselves with all their hearts to find out ways, to take some course to suppress, hinder, and no longer suffer these things: to put out some declaration against the errors and ways of the sectaries; as their sending emissaries into all parts of the kingdom, to poison the countries; as their dipping of persons in the cold water in winter, whereby persons fall sick, &c.; declaring that they shall be proceeded against as vagrants and rogues that go from country to country; and if any shall fall sick upon their dipping, and die, they shall be indicted upon the statute of killing the

Mr. Lamb apprehended.

king's subjects, and proceeded against accordingly. It is related of the senate of Zurich, that they made a decree against the Anabaptists, after they had been dealt withal by ten several disputations, and continued still obstinate, that whosoever re-baptized any that had been formerly baptized, he should be cast into the water and drowned. I could wish with all my heart there were a public disputation, even in the point of pædo-baptism and dipping, between some of the Anabaptists and our ministers. But if upon disputation and debate the Anabaptists should be found in an error, (as I am confident they would) that then the parliament should forbid all dipping, and take some severe course with all dippers, as the senate of Zurich did.*

In consequence of the ordinance referred to being published, the Lord Mayor sent his officers to the Baptist meeting in Coleman street on a Lord's day, being informed that certain laymen preached there. When they came they found two ministers, Mr. Lamb, the elder or pastor of the church, and a young man whose name is not mentioned, who was a preacher amongst them. The congregation were greatly disturbed, and some of them used rough language to the officers. But Mr. Lamb treated them very civilly, and asked permission to finish the service, giving his word that they would both appear before the Lord Mayor at six o'clock, to answer for what they did.

When they appeared before the Mayor, he demanded by what authority they took upon them to preach, and told them they had transgressed an ordinance of parliament. To which Mr. Lamb replied, he did not think they had violated the law, as they were both called and appointed to the office by as "reformed a church" as any in the world, alluding to

* Gangræna, p. 98—177.

Mr. Lamb imprisoned.

the words of the act; but acknowledged they were such as rejected the validity of infant baptism.

His lordship, not being satisfied, bound them over to answer to the charge before a committee of parliament. They were accordingly examined; and not giving satisfactory answers, they were committed to prison, where they were confined for a considerable time; but at length, by the intercession of their friends, they were set at liberty.

This was not the first time Mr. Lamb had been imprisoned. At the instigation of Archbishop Laud he had been brought in chains from Colchester to London, for not conforming to the established church, and for preaching to a separate congregation in that town, which was the place of his nativity. Being brought before the court of Star-chamber, he was charged with having administered the Lord's supper, and requested to confess it, which if he had done, it is expected he would have been banished the kingdom. He, however, neither owned nor denied it, but pleaded that a subject of England was under no obligation to bear witness against himself. He was, however, committed to prison, where he remained a considerable time, during which his wife went often to the Star-chamber court, and in behalf of herself and eight children, earnestly solicited the archbishop to grant her husband his liberty, which it was in his power to procure. But this unjust judge, instead of listening to her importunate solicitations, called to the people about him to take away that troublesome woman. Mr. Lamb was in almost all the gaols in and about London, as he always used to return to his work of preaching as soon as he got free from confinement. He was a zealous and popular preacher, and a man of great courage: he used to say, that a man was not fit to preach, who would not preach for Christ's

Mr. Paul Hobson committed.

sake, though he was sure to die for it as soon as he had done.

It was very common for the Baptists at this time to use Old-Ford river, near Bromley, in Middlesex, as a baptistry. This place was much frequented for that purpose. Mr. Lamb being employed in baptizing a woman here, her husband, a bitter enemy to the Baptists, brought a great stone under his coat, with an intention, as he afterwards confessed, to have thrown it at Mr. Lamb while he stood in the river. But he was so affected with the prayer before the administration of the ordinance, that he dropped the stone, fell into tears, and was himself the next person baptized. This was probably one of the places to which Doctor Featly alludes, when he says, "they flock in great multitudes to their Jordans, and both sexes enter into the river, and are dipped after their manner, with a kind of spell, containing the heads of their enormous tenets, and their engaging themselves in their schismatical covenants."

The same year, Mr. Paul Hobson was taken into custody by the governor of Newport Pagnel, for preaching against infant baptism, and reflecting upon the order against laymen's preaching. After being some time in confinement, Sir Samuel Luke, the governor, sent him to London. Soon after, his case was brought before the committee of examination; but as he had many friends among persons in authority, after being heard, he was immediately discharged, and preached publicly at a meeting-house in Moorfields, to the great confusion of his persecutors.

Among the sufferers for Antipædobaptism at this time, was the pious and learned Hansard Knollys. He had received episcopal ordination from the bishop of Peterborough, but was now pastor of a church in Great St. Helen's. The

Mr. Knollys imprisoned.

circumstances of his imprisonment are related by himself as follow :—

“ The committee for plundered ministers sent their warrant to the keeper of Ely-house to apprehend me, and bring me in safe custody before them. They took me out of my house, carried me to Ely-house, and there kept me prisoner several days, without any bail ; and at last carried me before the committee, who asked me several questions, to which I gave them sober and direct answers. Among others, the chairman, Mr. White, asked me who gave me authority to preach ? I told him the Lord Jesus Christ. He then asked me whether I were a minister. I answered that I was made a priest by the prelate of Peterborough ; but I had renounced that ordination, and did here again renounce the same. They asked me by what authority I preached in Bow church. I told them, after I had refused the desire of the churchwardens three times one day after another, their want of supply and earnestness prevailed with me, and I went thither. They opened the pulpit door, and I went up and preached from Isaiah lviii. ; and gave them such an account of that sermon (thirty ministers of the Assembly of Divines so called being present) that they could not gainsay, but bade me withdraw, and said nothing to me, nor could my jailor take any charge of me ; for the committee had called for him, and threatened to turn him out of his place for keeping me prisoner so many days. So I went away without any blame, or paying my fees.”

Though Mr. Knollys was dismissed by this committee, yet he tells us that he was soon after brought before the committee of examination, “ being accused to them (says he) that I had caused great disturbance to ministers and people in Suffolk ; which I gave so good and satisfactory an account of to

Baptists very numerous.

them, that upon their report thereof to the House of Commons, they ordered that I might preach in any part of Suffolk when the minister of the place did not preach; which was all I got for sixty pounds, which that trouble cost me to clear my innocence and the honour of the gospel." This circumstance is mentioned by Whitelocke; and it seems as if Mr. Kiffin was included in this prosecution, the following order appearing on the records of the house in 1648:—"Ordered that Mr. Kiffin and Mr. Knollys be permitted to preach in any part of Suffolk, at the petition of the Ipswich men."*

As this excellent man's history illustrates the spirit of those times, we shall present the reader with another extract.—"The sixty pounds expense (he says) I put upon Christ's score, for whose gospel, and preaching Jesus Christ upon that text, (Col. iii. 11.) *But Christ is all and in all*, I was stoned out of the pulpit, and prosecuted at a privy sessions, and fetched out of the country sixty miles to London, and was constrained to bring up four or five witnesses of good report and credit, to prove and vindicate myself from false accusations."†

These instances show what difficulties the Baptist ministers laboured under at this period, and also what are the consequences of government's interfering with the church of Christ, and making laws for its direction.

But all this opposition and persecution did not prevent the increase of the Baptists, nor the spread of their principles. In a work published by Robert Baille of Glasgow, 1646, entitled, *Anabaptism the true fountain of error*, it is said, "Their number till of late in England was not great, and the most of them were not English, but Dutch strangers; for besides the hand of the state, which ever lay heavy upon

* Whitelocke's Memorials, p. 363. † Life of Hansard Knollys.

Confession of Faith.

them, the labours of their children the Separatists were always great for their reclaiming. But under the shadow of Independency, the Anabaptists have lift up their heads, and increased their number above all the sects in the land.—As for the number of these seven churches which have published their confession of faith, and for their other thirty-nine congregations (for before the penning of that confession this sect was grown into forty-six churches, and that as I take it in and about London) they are a people very fond of religious liberty, and very unwilling to be brought under the bondage of the judgment of any other.

The confession of faith here alluded to was published about two years before by the Particular Baptists. It had been common with their enemies to load them with opprobrious epithets, both from the pulpit and the press: they therefore put forth this confession to clear themselves from the unjust aspersions cast upon them as persons who held many dangerous errors. Several editions of it were printed in 1643, 1644, and 1646, one of which was licenced by authority. The address prefixed to it was—"To the right honourable the lords, knights, citizens, and burgesses, in parliament assembled." It was signed in the name of seven congregations, or churches of Christ, in London; as also by a French congregation of the same judgment. The ministers' names are:—

THOMAS GUNNE,
JOHN MABBITT,
BENJAMIN COCKES,
THOMAS KILICOP,
JOHN SPILSBURY,
SAMUEL RICHARDSON,
THOMAS MUNDEN,
GEORGE TIPPING,

PAUL HOBSON,
THOMAS GOARE,
WILLIAM KIFFIN,
THOMAS PATIENT,
HANSARD KNOLLYS,
THOMAS HOLMES,
CHRISTOPHER DURET,
DENIS LE BARBIER.

Sentiments on Religious Liberty.

This confession, being put into the hands of many of the members of parliament, produced such an effect, that some of their greatest adversaries, (and even the bitter and inveterate Doctor Featly,) were obliged to acknowledge, that excepting the articles against infant baptism, it was an orthodox confession.

The following account of it is extracted from Neal: "This confession consisted of fifty-two articles, and is strictly Calvinistical in the doctrinal part, and according to the Independent discipline. It confines the subject of baptism to grown christians, and the mode to dipping. It admits of gifted lay-preachers, and acknowledges a due subjection to the civil magistrate in all things lawful, and concludes thus:—"We desire to live as becometh saints, endeavouring in all things to keep a good conscience, and to do to every man, of what judgment soever, as we would they should do unto us; that as our practice is, so it may prove us to be a conscionable, quiet, harmless, people, no way dangerous or troublesome to human society, and to labour with our own hands that we may not be chargeable to any, but have to give to him that needeth, both friend and enemy, accounting it more excellent to give than to receive. Also we confess that we know but in part, and that we are ignorant of many things that we desire and seek to know; and if any shall do us that friendly part to show us from the word of God that which we see not, we shall have cause to be thankful unto God and them. But if any man shall impose upon us any thing that we see not to be commanded by our Lord Jesus Christ, we should in his strength rather embrace all reproaches and tortures of men, to be stripped of all our outward comforts, and if it were possible to die a thousand deaths, rather than do any thing against the truths of God, or against the

Sentiments on Government.

light of our consciences. And if any shall call any thing we have said *heresy*, then do we with the apostle acknowledge that “after the way they call heresy so worship we the God of our fathers,” disclaiming all heresies rightly so called, because they are against Christ; and desiring to be stedfast and immoveable, always abounding in obedience to Christ, knowing our labour shall not be in vain in the Lord.”

The country at this time was in great confusion, and great difference of sentiment necessarily existed on the subject of government. It is with pleasure therefore we subjoin an extract from this confession, which gives a clear statement of their political sentiments. The forty-eighth article relates to magistracy, of which they say, “A civil magistracy is an ordinance of God, set up by him for the punishment of evil doers, and for the praise of them that do well; and that in all lawful things commanded by them subjection ought to be given by us in the Lord, not only for wrath, but for conscience sake; and that we are to make supplications for kings, and all that are in authority, that under them we may live a quiet and peaceable life, in all godliness and honesty.” To this declaration of their sentiments the following note is appended: “The supreme magistracy of this kingdom we acknowledge to be the king and parliament (now established), freely chosen by the kingdom, and that we are to maintain and defend all civil laws and civil officers made by them, which are for the good of the commonwealth. And we acknowledge with thankfulness that God has made the present king and parliament honourable in throwing down the prelatical hierarchy, because of their tyranny and oppression over us, under which this kingdom long groaned, for which we are ever engaged to bless God, and honour them for the same. And concerning the worship of God, there is but

Rights of Conscience.

one law-giver, who is able to kill and destroy (James iv. 12.) which is Jesus Christ, who hath given laws and rules sufficient in his word for his worship ; and for any to make more, were to charge Christ with want of wisdom or faithfulness, or both, in not making laws enough, or not good enough, for his house : surely it is our wisdom, duty, and privilege to observe Christ's laws only, Psalm ii. 6, 9, 10, 12 ; so it is the magistrate's duty to render the liberty of men's consciences, Eccles. viii. 8. (which is the tenderest thing unto all conscientious men, and most dear unto them, and without which all other liberties will not be worth naming, much less enjoying ;) and to protect all under them from all wrong, injury, oppression, and molestation ; so it is our duty not to be wanting in any thing which is for their honour and comfort, and whatsoever is for the good of the commonwealth wherein we live, it is our duty to do, and we believe it to be our express duty, especially in matters of religion, to be fully persuaded in our minds of the lawfulness of what we do, as knowing that whatsoever is not of faith is sin : and as we cannot do any thing contrary to our understanding and consciences, so neither can we forbear the doing of that which our understandings and consciences bind us to do ; and if the magistrate should require us to do otherwise, we are to yield our persons in a passive way to their power, as the saints of old have done, (James v. 4.) And thrice happy shall he be that shall lose his life for witnessing (though but for the least tittle,) of the truth of the Lord Jesus Christ. 1 Peter v. Galatians v."

The developement of their sentiments, which till now they had no opportunity of making known, was the cause of wiping away the reproach which had been cast upon them, and proved to the government that such persons did not

Mr. Jessey's change of sentiments.

deserve the treatment they had generally received : and from this period they were considered by them as worthy of being tolerated in a Christian commonwealth !

It was about this time that Mr. Henry Jessey, who was pastor of an Independent church, embraced the opinions of the Baptists. His eminent piety and learning had recommended him to the notice of some persons in the church of which Mr. Henry Jacob was pastor, founded in 1616, and the first Independent church in London. He was ordained in 1637, and continued a faithful labourer in this part of the Lord's vineyard till his death.

The circumstances which led to the alteration of his sentiments are thus stated. "It happened every now and then that several of his congregation embraced the opinions of the Baptists, and left the church on that account. In 1638, the year after he settled with them, six persons of note espoused those sentiments. In 1641, a much greater number ; and in 1643, the controversy was revived again amongst them, and a still greater number left them. Many of these were persons whom Mr. Jessey very much respected both for their piety and solidity of judgment, and the alteration of their sentiments occasioned frequent debates in the congregation about it ; so that he was necessarily put upon the study of this controversy. Upon a diligent and impartial examination of the holy scriptures and the writers of antiquity, he saw reason to alter his sentiments ; but he did not do it without great deliberation, much prayer, and divers conferences with pious and learned men of a different persuasion.

"His first conviction was about the *manner* of baptizing ; for he soon discovered that sprinkling was a modern corruption, brought into use without any just reason either

Mr. Jessey baptized by Mr. Knollys.

from scripture or antiquity; and therefore in the year 1642, the church being assembled, he freely declared to them that immersion, or dipping the whole body under water, appeared to him to be the right manner of administering baptism; that this mode was the import of the original word βαπτίζω; that it agreed with the examples of baptism recorded in scripture; and that it best represented the spiritual mysteries signified by it, the death and resurrection of Christ, and our dying to sin and rising again to newness of life. And therefore he proposed that in future, baptism should be administered after this manner. Mr. Jessey accordingly, for two or three years after this, baptized children by dipping them in the water."

About the year 1644, the controversy on the *subjects* of baptism was revived, and several debates were held in the congregation about it. Before Mr. Jessey avowed his sentiments on the side of adult baptism, he had a meeting with Dr. Goodwin, Mr. Philip Nye, Mr. Jeremiah Burroughs, Mr. Walter Cradock, and several others: but obtaining no satisfaction, he was baptized in June 1645, by Mr. Hansard Knollys. We have been the more particular in stating this event on account of Mr. Neal's having said, when speaking of Mr. Jessey, "Thus a foundation was laid for the first Baptist Church I have met with in England." As he had the manuscripts from which Crosby wrote, it is certainly a proof how little he regarded them, that he could not find any one prior to this.

The assembly of Divines were now sitting in Henry the seventh's chapel in Westminster, and it was natural to conclude that as a reformation in the church was proposed, the subject of baptism would be discussed. "Mr. John Tombes (says Mr. Palmer) was among the first of the clergy of

Assembly of Divines.

these times who endeavoured a reformation in the church by purging the worship of God of human inventions. He preached a sermon on the subject, which was afterwards printed by an order of the House of Commons." This exposed him to the rage of the church party; and at the beginning of the civil war in 1641, some of the King's forces coming into Herefordshire, he was obliged to leave his habitation and the church at Leominster, and remove to Bristol. He soon afterwards fled from Bristol, and with great difficulty arrived at London, Sep. 22, 1643.

"While here, he took an opportunity to divulge the scruples which he had entertained respecting *infant baptism*, to several ministers who were now come from all parts to form the Assembly of Divines. There was a meeting of the London ministers on the occasion, in Jan. 1643, but it ended without affording Mr. Tombes satisfaction. He then drew up in Latin the chief grounds of his doubts, and sent them to Mr. Whitaker, the chairman of the assembly of divines. But (adds Mr. Palmer) it must be owned he did not meet with that respectful treatment which his own character or the nature of the affair deserved."

Though Mr. Tombes was informed by one of that assembly, that they had appointed a committee to consider the point of infant baptism; yet after waiting many months, he could get no answer, nor even that the subject was debated whether infants should be baptized or not, though great altercations took place among them on the manner in which it should be administered.

His application to the assembly exposed him to their resentment. Being now minister of Fenchurch, attempts were made to prejudice his parishioners against him under the stigma of his being an Anabaptist; and though he never

Illiberality of the Assembly.

introduced this controversy into the pulpit, yet because he would not baptize infants, his stipend was withheld.

It happened just after this, that the honourable society at the Temple wanted a minister; and some of them who knew Mr. Tombes to be a man of great learning, and an excellent preacher, solicited the assembly that he might be appointed to that situation. When he applied to the assembly for their approbation of him as a minister, he was told by the examiner, "that there were many of the assembly that had scruples of conscience respecting it, because of his opinion. Also that in New England there was a law made and some proceedings thereupon, against those who denied the baptism of infants; and that here in England, the directory which enjoins the baptizing of infants was published, with the ordinance of parliament to make the not using of it penal; and that many godly, learned, and prudent persons, both of those who differed from him as well as those who agreed with him on this point, earnestly requested the publishing of his papers."

The situation at the Temple was after much difficulty obtained for him, on condition that he would not meddle with the controversy about infant baptism in the pulpit. To this he agreed upon two conditions;—that no one did preach for the baptizing of infants in his pulpit, and that no laws were likely to be enacted to make the denial of infant baptism penal.

He continued in this place about four years, and was then dismissed for publishing his first treatise against infant baptism, which contained his objections against that practice. This had been previously presented to the assembly, as also his *Examen of Mr. Marshall's Sermon on infant baptism*. For publishing this work he was censured as a

First law for sprinkling infants.

man of a restless spirit, and as one who intended to increase the divisions and confusions of the times, while others represented it as a breach of his promise to be silent on this subject.

To clear himself from these aspersions, he published his *Apology* in the year 1646; wherein he stated, that he had received such provocations, that the publishing of his thoughts on infant baptism was necessary, both "from faithfulness to God and charity to men." Of his *Apology*, Mr. John Bachiler, who licenced it says, "Having perused this mild apology, I conceive that the ingenuity, learning, and piety therein contained, deserve the press."

We have dwelt the longer on the history of Mr. Tombes in this place, in order to show the spirit of the Assembly of Divines respecting Baptism. It should seem that these presbyterian reformers adopted the practice and sentiments of the Episcopalians in the time of Edward vi., and resolved, "The custom of the church for baptizing young children is both to be commended, and by all means to be retained in the church."

They were however not so scrupulous respecting the manner of baptism, which they proposed to alter from immersion to either pouring or sprinkling; for it is a curious fact, that when it was put to the vote whether the directory should run thus, "The minister shall take water and sprinkle it, or pour it with his hand on the face or forehead of the child," the opposition to sprinkling was so great that it was carried only by a majority of one, there being twenty four against it, and but twenty five for it. It is said that this was carried entirely by the influence of Dr. Lightfoot, who was very strenuous that sprinkling should be accounted sufficient.*

* Robinson's History of Baptism, p. 450.

Character of the Assembly.

The Assembly of Divines have been very differently represented. Lord Clarendon, who was their sworn enemy, says: "About twenty of them were reverend and worthy persons, and episcopal in their judgment; but as to the remainder, they were but pretenders to divinity. Some were infamous in their lives and conversations, and most of them of very mean parts and learning, if not of scandalous ignorance, and of no other reputation than of malice to the Church of England." Mr. Baxter, on the contrary, who knew them better than his lordship, and whose word may be more safely relied on, says, that "they were men of eminent learning, godliness, ministerial abilities, and fidelity." Those who will read over the list of their names, preserved by Mr. Neal, will be able to judge whose opinion was most correct.

The far greater part of them were Presbyterians, and some of them Independents; "but," says Neal, "there was not one professed *Anabaptist* in the assembly." The worst trait in their character is the bigotry and illiberality which they manifested towards their dissenting brethren, as the Independents were called, and towards all others who were politely named in the cant of the day, "heretics, schismatics, and Anabaptists." They formed "a committee of accomodation;" but when the Independents offered so far to accomodate themselves to the prejudices of the Presbyterians as to communicate occasionally in their churches, &c. they gave them a flat denial, and were as much resolved to sacrifice conscientious scruples at the shrine of the idol Uniformity, as the papists and episcopalians had been before them. It was no wonder then that the Baptists, who could not bow down to the golden image which they had set up, should be cast into their burning fiery furnace; and we have no doubt but this would have been "heated seven times hotter than it was wont to be heated," had not a power

Increase of the Baptists.

superior to them, doubtless under the direction of the great Head of the church prevailed: "for," says Neal, "the spirit which these men manifested, proves what a terrible use they would have made of the sword, had they been entrusted with it."

These discussions in the assembly were likely to lead to an examination of the scriptures on the subject of baptism, as these eminent divines professed to make the word of God alone the standard of their decisions. We are therefore not at all surprised to be informed by Neal, that the opinion of the Baptists "began to spread wonderfully out of doors."—For, though Mr. Baxter published a piece which he entitled, *Plain scripture proof for church membership and infant baptism*, yet many eminent Pædobaptist ministers have acknowledged that neither scriptural precept nor example was to be found to support the practice.

Another cause for the increase of the Baptists was probably the favourable manner in which some eminent writers represented their principles, and the arguments they used to show the parliament the propriety of granting them liberty of conscience.

The right honorable Lord Robert Brook published about this time a treatise on episcopacy, in which he says: "I must confess that I begin to think there may be perhaps something more of God in these sects, which they call new schisms, than appears at the first glimpse. I will not, I cannot take upon me to defend that which men generally call Anabaptism; yet I conceive that sect is two-fold: some of them hold free will, community of all things, deny magistracy, and refuse to baptize their children: these truly are such heretics or atheists, that I question whether any divine should honour them so much as to dispute with them. There

Opinion of Lord Brook.

is another sort of them who only deny baptism to their children till they come to years of discretion, and then they baptize them; but in other things they truly agree with the church of England. Truly these men are much to be pitied; and I could heartily wish that before they are stigmatized with the opprobrious brand of schismatics, the truth might be cleared to them; for I conceive, to those that hold we may go no farther than scripture for doctrine or discipline, it may be very easy to err in this point now in hand, as the scripture seems not to have determined this matter.

“The analogy it hath with circumcision in the old law, (says his lordship,) is a fine rational argument to illustrate a point well proved before; but I somewhat doubt whether it be proof enough for that which some would prove by it; since besides the vast difference in the ordinance, the persons to be circumcised are stated by a positive law, so express that it leaves no place for scruple: but it is far otherwise in baptism, when all the designation of persons fit to be partakers, for aught I know, is only such as believe; for this is the qualification which, with exactest search, I find the scripture requires in persons to be baptized, and this it seems to require in all persons. Now how infants can properly be said to believe, I am not yet fully resolved.”*

While religious matters were in a very unsettled state in the nation, Doctor Jeremy Taylor, Bishop of Down and Connor, published a work entitled, *The liberty of prophesying*. In this he shows the unreasonableness of prescribing to others in matters of faith, and the iniquity of persecuting men for difference of sentiment; and says, among other things, “Many things condemned as erroneous have a great probability of truth on their side; at least so much might be said for them as to sway the conscience of many an honest

* *Episcopacy*, p. 96.

City Remonstrance.

enquirer after truth, and abate the edge of their fury who suppose they are deceived."

To prove his observations, he particularly considers the opinion of the Antipædobaptists, and by stating what might be said for that error as he called it, drew up a very elaborate system of arguments against infant baptism. Doctor Hammond said of this work, that it was the most diligent collection, and the most exact scheme of the arguments against infant baptism which he had seen; and that he had so represented the arguments for and against it, that many thought the Baptists were victorious.*

The great increase of the Baptists seems to have provoked the Presbyterians, who were now the ruling party, to a very high degree; and the same spirit of intolerance which the episcopalians had manifested towards the puritans, was now exhibited by them against all dissenters from what they, who could now prove the divine right of presbytery, were pleased to decree. The whole of their conduct in respect of those who differed from them, shows what Milton said to be true; that "*New Presbyterian is but Old Priest* WRIT LARGE."

Their spirit of intolerance may be learned from the history of those times, and especially from some acts of the government. On May 26, 1645, the lord mayor, court of aldermen, and common-council, presented a petition to parliament, commonly called *the City Remonstrance*, in which they desired, "that some strict and speedy course might be taken for the suppressing all private and separate congregations; that all Anabaptists, Brownists, heretics, schismatics, blasphemers, and all other sectaries, who conformed not to the public discipline established or to be established by parliament, might be fully declared against, and some effectual

* Crosby, v. i. p. 168.

Intolerance of the Scotch.

course settled for proceeding against such persons ; and that no person disaffected to presbyterial government, set forth or to be set forth by parliament, might be employed in any place of public trust.*

This remonstrance was supported by the whole Scotch nation, who acted in concert with their English brethren, as appears by a letter of thanks to the lord-mayor, aldermen, and common-council, from the general assembly, dated June 10, 1646, within a month after the delivery of the remonstrance. The letter commends their courageous appearance against sects and sectaries ; their firm adherence to the covenant, and their maintaining the Presbyterian government to be *the government of Jesus Christ!* It beseeches them to go on boldly in the work they had begun, till the three kingdoms were united in one faith and worship. At the same time they directed letters to the parliament, beseeching them also in the bowels of Jesus Christ to give to him the glory due to his name, by an immediate establishment of all his ordinances in their full integrity and power, according to the covenant. Nor did they forget to encourage the assembly at Westminster to proceed in their zeal against sectaries, and to stand boldly for the sceptre of Jesus Christ against the encroachments of earthly powers.

“The wise parliament (says Neal) received the lord-mayor and his brethren with marks of great respect and civility ; for neither the Scotch nor English Presbyterians were to be disgusted while the prize [the king], for which they had been fighting, was in their hands ; but the majority of the commons were displeased both with the remonstrance, and the high manner of enforcing it, as aiming by a united force to establish a sovereign reign and arbitrary power in the church, to which themselves and many of their friends were unwilling

* Crosby, v. i. p. 184.

Petition of the Army.

to submit: however, they dismissed the petitioners with a promise to take the particulars into consideration.”*

The sectaries in the army, as they were called, being alarmed at the approaching storm, procured a counter-petition from the city, with a great number of signatures, “applauding the labours and successes of the parliament in the cause of liberty, and praying them to go on with managing the affairs of the kingdom according to their wisdom, and not to suffer the free-born people of England to be enslaved on any pretence whatever, nor to suffer any set of people to prescribe to them in matters of government or conscience; adding, that the petitioners would stand by them with their lives and fortunes.”† Thus the parliament were embarrassed between the contenders for liberty and those for uniformity. An instance out of many may be produced of the opposition at this time manifested against the Baptists. Mr. Hansard Knollys having written a letter to Mr. John Dutton of Norwich, in which he had reflected on the intolerance of the Presbyterians, it happened to fall into the hands of some of the committee of Suffolk, who sent it to London, for the inspection of those in power, and it was afterwards published by Edwards, the author of *Gangræna*. As it seems to exhibit the views and feelings of the Baptists in reference to these measures, we shall here insert it.

“Beloved Brother,

“I salute you in the Lord. Your letter I received the last day of the week; and upon the first day I did salute the brethren in your name, who re-salute you, and pray for you.—The city presbyterians have sent a letter to the synod, dated from Sion College, against any toleration, and they are fasting and praying at Sion College this day about farther

* Neal, v. 3. p. 327. † Ibid. p. 328.]

Mr. Wyke apprehended.

contrivings against God's poor innocent ones ; but God will doubtless answer them according to the idol of their own hearts. To-morrow there is a fast kept by both houses, and the synod at Westminster. They say it is to seek God about the establishing of worship according to their covenant.—They have first *vowed*, now they make *inquiry*. God will certainly take the crafty in their own snare, and make the wisdom of the wise foolishness ; for he chooseth the foolish things of this world to confound the wise, and weak things to confound the mighty. Salute the brethren that are with you. Farewell.

“ Your brother in the faith and fellowship of the gospel,

“ *London, the 13th day
of the 11th month,
called January, 1645.*”

“ HANSARD KNOLLYS.”*

This year also Andrew Wyke was apprehended in the county of Suffolk for preaching and dipping. When he was brought before the committee of the county to be examined about his authority to preach, and the doctrines he held, he refused to give them any account of either, alledging that a freeman of England was not bound to answer any interrogatories, either to accuse himself or others ; but if they had ought against him, they should lay their charge, and produce their proofs. This was considered as great obstinacy, and as a high contempt of authority, and therefore he was immediately sent to jail.

We have no account how long Mr. Wyke was imprisoned ; but during his confinement a pamphlet was written either by himself or his friends, entitled, *The innocent in prison complaining ; or a true relation of the proceedings of the committee of Ipswich and the committee of Bury St. Edmunds in the county of Suffolk, against one Andrew Wyke, a witness*

* Gangræna, p. 3, 48.

Presbyterian intolerance.

of Jesus in the same county, who was committed to prison June 3, 1646. This work gives a particular account of the proceedings against him, and exclaims bitterly against the committees for their persecuting principles and illegal conduct.

The arguments which this grave assembly used to withhold from others the blessing of Christian liberty, came with a bad grace from men who had as earnestly pleaded for the privilege, while they were smarting under the lash of the prelates. "To comply with this request (say they) would open a gap for all sects to challenge such a liberty as their due: this liberty is denied by the churches in New England, and we have as great right to deny it as they. This desired forbearance will make a perpetual division in the church, and be a perpetual drawing away from the churches under the rule. Upon the same pretence, those who scruple *infant baptism* may withdraw from their churches, and so separate into another congregation; and so in that some practice may be scrupled, and they separate again. Are these divisions and sub-divisions as lawful as they are infinite? Or must we give that respect to the errors of men's consciences so as to satisfy their scruples by allowance of this liberty to them? Scruple of conscience is no cause of separation, nor doth it take off causeless separation from being schism, which may arise from errors of conscience as well as carnal and corrupt reason: therefore we conceive the causes of separation must be shewn to be such, *ex naturâ rei*, as will bear it out; and therefore we say that granting the liberty desired will give a countenance to schism."

Many instances of this spirit might be adduced; but we shall only notice the following. A work was published by the assembly in 1650, entitled, *A vindication of the Presbyterian government and ministry; with an exhortation to all*

 Charge of indecency.

ministers, elders, and people within the province of London, &c. Published by the ministers and elders met together in a provincial assembly. George Walker, moderator; Arthur Jackson and Edmund Calamy, assessors; Roger Drake and Elidad Blackwell, scribes.

This work contains the following expressions:—"Whatsoever doctrine is contrary to godliness, and opens a door to libertinism and profaneness, you must reject it as *soul poison*; such is the doctrine of a universal toleration in religion." The ministers in the different parts of the country seem to have been of the same mind. Those in Lancashire published a paper in 1648, called *The harmonious consent of the Lancashire ministers with their brethren in London*; in which they say, "A toleration would be putting a sword into a madman's hand; a cup of poison into the hand of a child; a letting loose of madmen with firebrands in their hands, and appointing a city of refuge in men's consciences for the devil to fly to; a laying a stumbling-block before the blind; a proclaiming liberty to the wolves to come into Christ's fold to prey upon the lambs: neither would it be to provide for tender consciences, but to take away all conscience."*

We turn away with disgust from these intolerant sentiments, and rejoice that the attempt has been made, and that none of the predicted effects have ensued.

It was very common at this time for the enemies of the Baptists to represent the practice of immersion as indecent and dangerous, and to argue that it could not be according to divine authority, because a breach of the sixth commandment, "Thou shalt not kill;" and the divine declaration, "I will have mercy and not sacrifice." Who would have thought that Mr. Richard Baxter could have expressed himself in language like the following? "My

* Crosby, v. i. p. 190.

Charged with Murder.

sixth argument shall be against the usual manner of their baptizing, as it is by dipping over head in a river, or other cold water. That which is a plain breach of the sixth commandment, *Thou shalt not kill*, is no ordinance of God, but a most heinous sin. But the ordinary practice of baptizing over head and in cold water, as necessary, is a plain breach of the sixth commandment, therefore it is no ordinance of God, but a heinous sin. And as Mr. Cradock shows in his book of gospel liberty, the magistrate ought to *restrain* it, to save the lives of his subjects—That this is *flat murder*, and no better, being ordinarily and generally used, is undeniable to any understanding man—And I know not what trick a covetous landlord can find out to get his tenants to die apace, that he may have new fines and heriots, likelier than to encourage such preachers, that he may get them all to turn Anabaptists. I wish that *this device* be not it which countenanceth these men: and covetous physicians, methinks, should not be much against them. Catarrhs and obstructions, which are the too great fountains of most mortal diseases in man's body, could scarce have a more notable means to produce them where they are not, or to increase them where they are. Apoplexies, lethargies, palsies, and all other comatous diseases would be promoted by it. So would cephalalgies, hemicranies, phthises, debility of the stomach, crudities, and almost all fevers, dysenteries, diarrhæas, colics, iliac passions, convulsions, spasms, tremors, and so on. All hepatic, splenetic, and pulmonic persons, and hypochondriacs, would soon have enough of it. In a word, it is good for nothing but to dispatch men out of the world that are burdensome, and to ranken church yards—I conclude, if murder be a sin, then dipping ordinarily over head in England is a sin; and if those who would make it men's re-

Remarks of Mr. Booth.

ligion to murder themselves, and urge it upon their consciences as their duty, are *not to be suffered* in a commonwealth, any more than highway murderers; then judge how these Anabaptists, that teach the necessity of such dipping, are to be suffered—My seventh argument is also against another wickedness in their manner of baptizing, which is their dipping persons *naked*, which is *very usual* with many of them, or next to naked, as is usual with the modestest that I have heard of—If the minister must go into the water with the party—it will certainly tend to his death, though they may scape that go in but once. Would not vain young men come to a baptizing to see the nakedness of maids, and make a mere jest and sport of it?”*

It is with pleasure we give a place to the reflections of the late venerable Abraham Booth on these remarks, which certainly merited severe animadversion, especially as they were published at a time when, as the sequel will show, they were calculated to produce some serious consequences towards those who were in the practice of baptizing by immersion.

“Were this representation just (says Mr. Booth,) we should have no reason to wonder if his following words expressed a fact: ‘I am still more confirmed that a visible judgment of God doth still follow Anabaptizing wherever it comes.’ It was not without reason, I presume, that Mr. Baxter made the following acknowledgment: ‘I confess my style is *naturally keen*.’ I am a little suspicious also that Dr. Owen had some cause to speak of his writings as follows:—‘I verily believe that if a man who had nothing else to do, should gather into a heap all the expressions which in his late books, confessions, and apologies, have a lovely aspect towards himself, as to ability, diligence, sincerity, on the one

* Baxter’s Plain Scripture Proof, p. 134—137.

Remarks of Mr. Booth.

hand; with all those which are full of *reproach* and *contempt* towards others, on the other; the view of them could not but a little startle a man of so great modesty, and of such eminency in the mortification of pride, as Mr. Baxter is.' Hence we learn that the Baptists are not the only persons who have felt the weight of Mr. Baxter's hand; so that if a recollection of others having suffered under his keen resentment can afford relief, the poor Baptists may take some comfort, and it is an old saying,

Solamen miseris socios habuisse doloris.

" Besides, there is a precept of Horace which occurs to remembrance, and is of use in the present exigence. *Amara lento temperet risu*, is the advice to which I refer; and under the influence of this direction, we are led to say, Poor man! He seems to be afflicted with a violent hydrophobia! For he cannot think of any person being immersed in cold water, but he starts, he is convulsed, he is ready to die with fear.—Immersion, you must know, is like Pandora's box, and pregnant with a great part of those diseases which Milton's angel presented to the view of our first father. A compassionate regard therefore to the lives of his fellow-creatures compels Mr. Baxter to solicit the aid of magistrates against this destructive plunging, and to cry out in the spirit of an exclamation once heard in the Jewish temple, *Ye men of Israel, help!* or Baptist ministers will depopulate your country.—Know you not that these plunging teachers are shrewdly suspected of being pensioned by avaricious landlords, to destroy the lives of your liege subjects? Exert your power: apprehend the delinquents: appoint an *Auto da Fe*: let the venal dippers be baptized in blood, and thus put a salutary stop to this pestiferous practice.—What a pity it is that the cele-

Remarks of Mr. Booth.

brated History of Cold Bathing, by Sir John Floyer, was not published half a century sooner! It might, perhaps, have preserved this good man from a multitude of painful paroxysms occasioned by the thought of immersion in cold water.—Were I seriously (adds Mr. Booth) to put a query to these assertions of Mr. Baxter, it should be with a little variation in the words of David, “*What shall be given unto thee, or what shall be done unto thee, thou FALSE pen?*” Were the temper which dictated the preceding caricature to receive its just reproof, it might be in the language of Michael, *The Lord rebuke thee.*

“Before I dismiss this extraordinary language of Mr. Baxter (adds Mr. Booth) it is proper to be observed, that the charge of shocking indecency, which he lays with so much confidence against the Baptists of those times, was not suffered by them to pass without animadversion. No, he was challenged to make it good: it was denied, it was confuted by them. With a view to which Dr. Wall says, ‘The English Antipædobaptists need not have made so great an outcry against Mr. Baxter for his saying that they baptized *naked*; for if they had, it had been no more than the primitive Christians did.’ But surely they had reason to complain of *misrepresentation*; such misrepresentation as tended to bring the greatest odium upon their sentiment and practice. Besides, however ancient the practice charged upon them was, its antiquity could not have justified their conduct except it had been derived from divine command, or apostolic example; neither of which appears.”*

When a circumstance is related which took place in the year 1646, it will not be thought that Mr. Booth has treated the misrepresentations of Mr. Baxter with too great severity.

* Pædobap. Exam. vol. i. p. 263—265.

Samuel Oates tried for Murder.

That to which we refer is the following. Mr. Samuel Oates, a very popular preacher and great disputant, taking a journey into Essex, preached in several parts of that, and one of the adjoining counties, and baptized great numbers of people, especially about Bocking, Braintree, and Farling. This made the Presbyterians in those parts very uneasy, especially the ministers, who complained bitterly that such things should be permitted, and endeavoured to set the magistrates against him, in which they at length succeeded.

The bitter Edwards has printed a letter, sent him, as he says, by a learned and godly minister in Essex, which says, "No magistrate in the country dare meddle with him; for they say they have hunted these out of the country into their dens in London, and imprisoned some, and they are released and sent like decoy-ducks into the country, to fetch in more; so that they go into divers parts of Essex with the greatest confidence and insolency that can be imagined."*

It happened that among the hundreds whom Mr. Oates had baptized, a young woman, named Anne Martin, died a few weeks after; and this they attributed to her being dipped in cold water. They accordingly prevailed on the magistrates to send him to prison, and put him in irons as a murderer, in order to his trial at the next assizes. He was tried at Chelmsford, and great endeavours were used to bring him in guilty. But many credible witnesses were produced, and among others the mother of the young woman, who all testified that the said Anne Martin was in better health for several days after her baptism than she had been for several years before. The jury, from the evidence produced, pronounced a verdict of not guilty, which it is thought greatly mortified his enemies who were concerned in the prosecution.†

* Gangræna, p. 2, 3. † Crosby, vol. i. p. 238.

Mr. Denne apprehended.

So great was the enmity against Mr. Oates, that on his going to Dunmow in Essex not long after this, some of the town's-people dragged him out of the house where he was, and threw him into a river, boasting that they had thoroughly dipped him.

Mr. Henry Denne was apprehended again in June this year, and committed to prison at *Spalding* in *Lincolnshire*, for preaching and baptizing by immersion. His chief prosecutors were two justices of the peace. They sent the constable to apprehend him on the Lord's day morning, with orders that he should keep him in custody to prevent his preaching; for the people resorting so much to him was no small occasion of their taking offence. Upon the hearing his case, there was but one witness of the crime with which he was charged, viz. *dipping*; as he refused to confess himself guilty.

It will give the reader a better view of the proceedings in those times, to see the two examinations that were taken on this occasion.

“ The examination of Anne Jarrat, of Spalding, spinster, June 22, 1646, before Master Thomas Irbie and Master John Harrington, commissioners of the peace.

“ This examine saith, on Wednesday last, in the night about eleven or twelve of the clock, Anne Stennet and Anne Smith, the servants of John Mackernesse, did call out this examine to go with them to the *little croft*, with whom this examine did go; and coming thither, Master Denne and John Mackernesse, and a stranger or two, followed after: and being come to the *river* side, Master Denne went into the water, and there did baptize Anne Stennet, Anne Smith, Godfrey Roote, and John Sowter in this examine's presence.

“ ANNE JARRAT, (W) her Mark.”

Mr. Denne examined.

“ June 21, 1646. Lincolne Holland, Henry Denne, of Caxton in the county of Cambridge, examined before John Harrington and Thomas Irby, esquires, two of his majesty's justices of the peace.

“ This examine saith, that he liveth at Caxton aforesaid, but doth exercise at Elslly within a mile of his own house; and saith that he took orders about sixteen years since from the bishop of St. David's; and that on Monday last he came to Spalding, being invited thither by John Mackernesse to come to his house. And that he hath exercised his gifts about four times in several places in Spalding; viz. at the house of John Mackernesse and Mr. Enston.— As for baptizing any, he doth not confess.

“ JOHN HARRINGTON.”

Though this zealous magistrate spoke of committing Mr. Denne to Lincoln gaol, yet it does not appear that he carried his threat into execution. Had this been the case, it is likely Edwards, who relates this affair of his examination*, would have commended him for his zeal in punishing such an evil doer; who in his opinion, and in Mr. Baxter's, was a breaker of the sixth commandment.

Some very severe ordinances were passed by this parliament, which were aimed at all dissenters, especially ministers: and had the spirit of the times permitted them to be carried into effect, there is no doubt but great numbers would have severely suffered from their operation.

It is a little extraordinary that in the next year, 1647, considerable favour was manifested towards the Baptists.— Perhaps it arose from the policy of Cromwell, wishing to check the overgrown power of the Presbyterians, or from

* Gangraena, vol. iii. p. 86, 87.

Baptists favoured by Parliament.

some of his officers and other persons of considerable influence embracing their sentiments, and using their interest in their behalf.

In a declaration of the Lords and Commons, published March 4, 1647, it is said, "The name of Anabaptism hath indeed contracted much odium by reason of the extravagant opinions of some of that name in Germany, tending to the disturbance of the government, and the peace of all states, which opinions and practices we abhor and detest. But for their opinion against the baptism of infants, it is only a difference about a circumstance of time in the administration of an ordinance, wherein in former ages, as well as in this, learned men have differed both in opinion and practice.— And though we could wish that all men would satisfy themselves, and join with us in our judgment and practice in this point; yet herein we hold it fit that men should be convinced by the word of God, with great gentleness and reason, and not beaten out of it by force and violence." *

This declaration discovered much of a true Christian spirit; and happy would it have been if all governments had always acted on such principles. But it is lamentable to observe, that the very next year, a more severe law was passed than any that had been made in England since the Reformation. It bore date May 2, 1648, and was entitled, *An ordinance of the Lords and Commons assembled in Parliament, for the punishment of blasphemies and heresies*. One article was, "Whosoever shall say that the baptism of infants is unlawful, or that such baptism is void, and that such persons ought to be baptized again, and in pursuance thereof shall baptize any person formerly baptized; or shall say the church government by presbytery is antichristian or un-

* Crosby, vol. i. p. 196.

Death of the King, January 30, 1648.

lawful, shall upon conviction by the oath of two witnesses, or by his own confession, be ordered to renounce his said error in the public congregation of the parish where the offence was committed, and in case of refusal, he shall be committed to prison till he find sureties that he shall not publish or maintain the said error any more.”*

It is likely that the death of the king in this year, and the confusion which resulted from it, might prevent this cruel and shameful ordinance from being carried into effect, as we do not hear that any were prosecuted upon it.

From Whitlocke we learn, that the parliament after this event were so intent on religion, that they devoted Friday in every week to devise ways and means for promoting it.— Their attention appears to have been particularly directed to Wales, where the people were so destitute of the means of religious knowledge that they had neither bibles nor catechisms. Their clergymen were ignorant and idle, so that they had scarcely a sermon from one quarter of a year to another, nor was there a sufficient maintenance for such as were capable of instructing them. The parliament taking their case into consideration, passed an act, February 22, 1649, “for the better propagation and preaching of the gospel in Wales, for the ejecting of scandalous ministers and schoolmasters, and redress of some grievances, to continue in force three years.”† The principal amongst the commissioners appointed was Mr. Vavasor Powell, a very zealous and laborious minister of the Baptist denomination. The good effects of their regulations were soon discovered; “for,” says Mr. Whitlocke, speaking of the year 1652, “by this time there were a hundred and fifty good preachers in the thirteen Welch counties, most of whom preached three or

* Crosby, vol. i. p. 203. † Neal, vol. iv. p. 15.

Baxter's description of Barebone's Parliament.

four times a week; they were placed in every market town; and in most great towns two schoolmasters, able, learned, and university men; the tythes were all employed to the uses directed by act of parliament; that is, to the maintenance of godly ministers, to the payment of taxes and officers, to schoolmasters, and the fifths to the wives and children of the ejected clergy.*

This account of Whitlocke's is valuable, as it serves to contradict what is asserted by Mr. Baxter respecting this transaction. Speaking of the Little Parliament, or what was called Barebone's Parliament, he says, "This *conventicle* made an act that magistrates should marry people instead of ministers, and then they came to the business of tythes and ministers. Before this, Harrison, being authorized thereto, had at once put down all the parish ministers in Wales, because that most of them were ignorant and scandalous, and had set up a few itinerant preachers in their stead, who were for number incompetent to so great a charge, there being but one to many of those wide parishes. So that the people having a sermon but once in so many weeks, and nothing else in the mean time, were ready to turn Papists or any thing else. And this is the plight which the Anabaptists and other sectaries would have brought the whole land to. And all was with this design, that the people might not be tempted to think the parish churches to be true churches, or infant baptism true baptism, or themselves true Christians; but might be convinced that they must be made Christians and churches in the way of the Baptists and separatists. Hereupon, Harrison became the head of the Anabaptists and sectaries, and Cromwell now began to design the heading of a soberer party that were for learning and ministry,

* Whitlocke's Memorial, p. 518.

Contradicted by Neal.

while yet he was the equal Protector of all. At length it was put to the vote in this parliament, whether all the parish ministers in England should at once be put down or not.— And it was but accidentally carried in the negative by two voices. And it was taken for granted that tythes and universities would next be voted down; and now Cromwell must be their saviour, or they must perish.” *

Mr. Baxter supposes that Cromwell hurried on these measures to accomplish the design he had formed of obtaining the supreme power. This event certainly succeeded them; but whether it was occasioned by them, it is difficult to say. Respecting the conduct of this parliament, Mr. Neal observes, that nothing which Mr. Baxter charges them with appears in their acts. “When (says he) the city of London petitioned that more learned and approved ministers might be sent into the country to preach the gospel; that their settled maintenance by law might be confirmed, and their just properties preserved, and that the universities might be zealously countenanced and encouraged; the petitioners had the thanks of that house; and the committee gave it as their opinion, that commissioners should be sent into the several counties, who should have power to eject scandalous and insufficient ministers, and to settle others in their room.— They were to appoint preaching in all vacant places, that none might have above three miles from a place of public worship. That such as were approved for public ministers should have the maintenance provided by the laws; and that if any scrupled the payment of tythes, the neighbouring justices of peace should settle the value, which the owner of the land should be obliged to pay; but as for the tythes themselves, they were of opinion that the incumbents and

* Baxter's Life and Times, p. 67, 68.

Baptists resign their Power.

impropriators had a right in them, and therefore they could not be taken away till they were satisfied." *

The act respecting marriages was confirmed by the Protector's parliament in 1656; so that it is pretty evident this measure was not so despicable as Mr. Baxter represents it.— But it should seem upon the whole that Mr. Neal is right when he says, "they were most of them men of piety, but no great politicians. The acts of this convention (he adds) were of little significance; for when they found the affairs of the nation too intricate, and the several parties too stubborn to yield to their ordinances, they wisely resigned, and surrendered back their sovereignty into the same hands that gave it them, after they had sat five months and twelve days."

The members of this parliament seem to have thought that the period predicted by Daniel was come, when "the saints of the Most High should take and possess the kingdom for ever and ever." But many events afterwards took place which convinced them that they were sadly mistaken.

From the character and talents of some of those ministers whose names have been mentioned in this chapter as the pastors of the Baptist churches, it will not be necessary to use much argument in order to remove the impression which the gross misrepresentations of Mr. Neal concerning them are likely to make on those who depend upon the accuracy of his statement.

He says, "The advocates of this doctrine [baptism] were for the most part of the meanest of the people; their preachers were generally illiterate, and went about the counties making proselytes of all that would submit to their immersion, without a due regard to the principles of religion or their moral characters." The only reason he assigns for

* Neal, vol. iv. p. 69.

Mr. Neal's illiberality.

this foul slander is, that Mr. Baxter says, "There are but few of them that had not been the opposers and troublers of faithful ministers; that in this they strengthened the hands of the profane, and that in general, reproach of ministers, faction, pride, and scandalous practices, were fomented in their way."

Let the reader judge, when he has made due allowance for the bitterness of Mr. Baxter towards them, whether even this will justify the conclusion, "that they paid not a due regard to the principles and characters of those whom they baptized?" It should seem that Mr. Neal's conscience reproached him for writing this libel upon the majority of the advocates of this doctrine; for he immediately adds, "But still there were amongst them *some learned*, and a *great many* sober and devout Christians, who disallowed of the imprudence of their country friends. The two most learned divines that espoused their cause were Mr. Francis Cornwell, M. A. of Emanuel College, and Mr. John Tombes, B. A. educated in the university of Oxford, a person of incomparable parts, well versed in the Greek and Hebrew languages, and a most excellent disputant. He wrote several letters to Mr. Selden, against infant baptism, and published a *Latin Exercitation* upon the same subject, containing several arguments, which he presented to the committee appointed by the assembly to put a stop to the progress of this opinion."*

This eulogium on Mr. Cornwell and Mr. Tombes appears to be designed as a balsam for the wound which he had inflicted. But why did he not tell all the truth respecting Mr. Baxter's opinion?—"And for the Anabaptists themselves, (says he,) though I have written and said so much against them; as I found that *most of them* were persons of zeal in

* Neal, vol. iii. p. 162, 163.

Mr. Baxter's contrition.

religion, so *many of them* were sober and godly people, and differed from others but in the point of infant baptism, or at most in the point of predestination and free-will, and perseverance."* Had Mr. Neal a knowledge of this testimony of Mr. Baxter to the character of *many* of them being sober and godly people, and *most* of them persons of zeal in religion? Surely if he had, he would either have been prevented from dealing in such illiberal censures; or if he had made use of such provoking language, he would have taken an opportunity to have retracted his declarations, like as Mr. Baxter had done in his piece on confirmation. "Upon a review of my arguments (says he) with Mr. Tombes upon the controversy about infant baptism, I find I have used too many provoking words, for which I am heartily sorry, and desire pardon both of God and him."†

The ingenuousness of this acknowledgment is so creditable to Mr. Baxter's piety, that it compels us to forgive him the injury he has done us in furnishing Mr. Neal with matter for his slander. However, if he had made no such acknowledgment, we have no doubt that all impartial persons who know any thing of the character of Kiffin, Knollys, Jessey, and many others who united with them on a conviction of the truth of their sentiments at a very early period, and were the principal persons by whom their numbers were increased, would have been satisfied that he had defamed them; especially when they recollected that they were greatly opposed by the government and the assembly, and were "THE SECT EVERY WHERE SPOKEN AGAINST."

Before we close this chapter we shall notice some events which transpired at this period, which will give the reader a view of the sentiments of the Baptists on the important sub-

* Crosby, vol. iii. Pref. p. 55. † Ibid.

Sufferings of Baptists in America.

ject of liberty of conscience. We shall introduce the subject by referring to a letter that was published in England in 1652, giving an account of the sufferings of the Baptists in America, particularly of a Mr. Obadiah Holmes, an Englishman, who, for presuming to baptize a person in the Massachusetts colony, was apprehended, imprisoned, and fined; and on refusing to pay the fine was severely flogged. This letter was addressed, "Unto the well beloved John Spilsbury, William Kiffin, and to the rest that in London stand fast in the faith, and continue to walk stedfastly in that order of the gospel which was once delivered unto the saints by Jesus Christ, Obadiah Holmes, an unworthy witness that Jesus is the Lord, and of late a prisoner for Jesus' sake at Boston."

Before we give the letter it may be proper to glance at the circumstances of this disgraceful affair.

Mr. John Clarke, and Mr. Obadiah Holmes, who is said to have been descended from a good family in England, and another brother, went from Rhode Island to visit a brother at Lynn beyond Boston, July 15, 1651, and held worship with him the next day being Lord's day. But Mr. Clarke could not get through his first sermon before he and his friends were seized by an officer, and carried to a tavern, and to the parish worship in the afternoon. At the close of the service Mr. Clarke spoke a few words, and then a magistrate sent them into confinement, and the next day to Boston prison. On July 31, they were tried before the court of assistants, by whom Clarke was fined *twenty* pounds, Holmes *thirty*, and John Crandal *five*. When Judge Endicott gave this sentence against them, he said—"You go up and down, and secretly insinuate things into those that are weak, but you cannot maintain it before our ministers; you may try

Mr. Holmes's Letter.

and dispute with them." Upon this Mr. Clarke sent a letter from the prison to the court, offering to dispute upon his principles with any of their ministers; but his offer was not accepted. He was however with Crandal released from prison, and desired to depart out of the colony as soon as possible. But the magistrates determined to make an example of Mr. Holmes, and after keeping him in prison till September, he was brought out to be punished in Boston.—Two magistrates, named Norvel and Flint, were present to see the sentence properly executed. This affair will be best related by an extract from the above mentioned printed letter.

Mr. Holmes says—"I desired to speak a few words, but Mr. Norvel answered, It is not time now to speak: whereupon I took leave, and said, Men, brethren, fathers, and countrymen, I beseech you to give me leave to speak a few words, and the rather because here are many spectators to see me punished, and I am to seal with my blood, if God give me strength, that which I hold and practice in reference to the word of God, and the testimony of Jesus. That which I have to say in brief is this, although I am no disputant, yet seeing I am to seal with my blood what I hold, I am ready to defend by the word, and to dispute that point with any that shall come forth to withstand it. Mr. Norvel answered, now was no time to dispute: then said I, I desire to give an account of the faith and order which I hold; and this I desired three times; but in comes Mr. Flint, and saith to the executioner, Fellow, do thine office; for this fellow would but make a long speech to delude the people: so I being resolved to speak, told the people, That which I am to suffer for is the word of God, and testimony of Jesus Christ.—No, saith Mr. Norvel, it is for your error

Letter continued.

and going about to deceive the people. To which I replied, Not for errors, for in all the time of my imprisonment, wherein I was left alone, my brethren being gone, which of all your ministers came to convince me of error? And when upon the governor's words a motion was made for a public dispute, and often renewed upon fair terms, and desired by hundreds, what was the reason it was not granted? Mr. Nowel told me, it was his fault that went away and would not dispute, but that the writings will clear at large. Still Mr. Flint calls the man to do his office; so before and in the time of his pulling off my clothes I continued speaking; telling them that I had so learned, that for *all Boston* I would not give my body into their hands thus to be bruised upon another account, yet upon this I would not give the hundredth part of a *wampum peague* [the sixth part of a penny] to free it out of their hands; and that I made as much conscience of unbuttoning one button, as I did of paying thirty pounds in reference thereunto. I told them moreover, that the Lord having manifested his love towards me, in giving me repentance towards God and faith in Christ, and so to be baptized in water by a messenger of Jesus, in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, wherein I have fellowship with him in his death, burial, and resurrection, I am now come to be baptized in afflictions by your hands, that so I may have further fellowship with my Lord, and am not ashamed of his sufferings, for by his stripes am I healed. And as the man began to lay the strokes on my back, I said to the people, though my flesh should fail, and my spirit should fail, yet God would not fail; so it pleased the Lord to come in and to fill my heart and tongue as a vessel full, and with an audible voice I broke forth, praying the Lord not to lay this sin to their charge, and telling the people that now I found

Letter continued.

he did not fail me, and therefore now I should trust him for ever who failed me not; for in truth as the strokes fell upon me, I had such a spiritual manifestation of God's presence as I never had before, and the outward pain was so removed from me that I could well bear it, yea, and in a manner felt it not, although it was grievous, as the spectators said, the man striking with all his strength, spitting in his hand three times, with a three-corded whip, giving me therewith thirty strokes. When he had loosed me from the post, having joyfulness in my heart and cheerfulness in my countenance, as the spectators observed, I told the magistrates, You have struck me with roses; and said moreover, although the Lord had made it easy to me, yet I pray God it may not be laid to your charge.

“After this many came to me, rejoicing to see the power of God manifested in weak flesh; but *sinful* flesh takes occasion hereby to bring others into trouble, informs the magistrates hereof, and so two more are apprehended as for contempt of authority; their names are John Hazel and John Spur, who came indeed and did shake me by the hand, but did use no words of reproach or contempt unto any. No man can prove that the first spoke any thing; and for the second, he only said, Blessed be the Lord; yet these two for taking me by the hand, and thus saying, after I had received my punishment, were sentenced to pay forty shillings or to be whipt; but were resolved against paying the fine. Nevertheless, after one or two days imprisonment, one paid John Spur's fine, and he was released; and after six or seven days imprisonment of brother Hazel, even the day when he should have suffered, another paid his, and so he escaped, and the next day went to visit a friend about six miles from Boston, where he fell sick the same day, and within ten days he

Letter continued.

ended his life. When I was come to the prison, it pleased God to stir up the heart of an old acquaintance of mine, who with much tenderness, like the good Samaritan, poured oil into my wounds, and plastered my sores; but there was presently information given of what was done, and enquiry made who was the surgeon, and it was commonly reported he should be sent for; but what was done I yet know not. Now thus it hath pleased the Father of mercies to dispose of the matter, that my bonds and imprisonment have been no hindrance to the gospel; for before my return, some submitted to the Lord, and were baptized, and divers were put upon the way of enquiry: and now being advised to make my escape by night, because it was reported that there were warrants for me, I departed; and the next day after, while I was on my journey, the constable came to search at the house where I lodged; so I escaped their hands, and by the good hand of my heavenly Father brought home again to my near relations, my wife and eight children, the people of our town and Providence, having taken pains to meet me four miles in the woods, where we rejoiced together in the Lord. Thus I have given you, as briefly as I can, a true relation of things; wherefore, my brethren, rejoice with me in the Lord, and give all glory to him, for he is worthy; to whom be praise for evermore; to whom I commit you, and put up my earnest prayers for you, that by my late experience, who trusted in God and have not been deceived, you may trust in him perfectly: wherefore, my dearly beloved brethren, trust in the Lord, and you shall not be ashamed nor confounded. So I rest, your's in the bonds of charity,

“OBADIAH HOLMES.”

Sir Richard Saltonstall's Letter.

The publishing of this letter in England appears to have produced a powerful sensation on the public mind, and to have excited great disapprobation of this persecuting spirit and conduct manifested by these American *Independants*. Sir Richard Saltonstall who was an early magistrate in the Massachusetts's colony when Boston was first planted, but was now in London, wrote to the ministers of Boston, Mr. Cotton, and Mr. Wilson, and said:—

“ Reverend and dear friends, whom I unfeignedly love and respect,

“ IT doth not a little grieve my spirit to hear what sad things are reported of your tyranny and persecution in New England; that you fine, whip, and imprison men for their consciences. First, you compel those to come into your assemblies as you know will not join with you in worship, and when they shew their dislike thereof, or witness against it, then you stir up your magistrates to punish them for such (as you conceive) public affronts. Truly, friends, this practice of compelling any in matters of worship to do that whereof they are not fully persuaded, is to make them sin, for so the apostle tells us, Rom. xiv. 23. and many are made hypocrites thereby, conforming in their outward man for fear of punishment. We pray for you, and wish you prosperity every way; hoping the Lord would have given you so much light and love *there*, that you might have been eyes to God's people *here*, and not to practise those courses in a wilderness which you went so far to prevent. These rigid ways have laid you very low in the hearts of the saints. I do assure you I have heard them pray in public assemblies, that the Lord would give you meek and humble spirits, not to strive so much for uniformity, as to keep the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace. When I was in Holland about

Mr. Cotton's Letter.

the beginning of our wars, I remember some Christians there that then had serious thoughts of planting in New England, desired me to write to the governor thereof, to know if those who differ from you in opinion, yet holding the same foundations in religion, as Anabaptists, Seekers, Antinomians, and the like, may be permitted to live among you ; to which I received this short answer from your then governor, Mr. Dudley—" God forbid (said he) that our love for the truth should be grown so cold that we should tolerate errors."

The good sense and Christian spirit manifested in this expostulation, one would have thought should have convinced Christians of the impropriety of casting stumbling-blocks in their brethren's way, and that they would have acknowledged their faults, and mourned on account of their folly and wickedness ; instead of which we find the Reverend Mr. Cotton, an eminent minister at Boston, justifying their conduct in the following letter, sent as an answer to Sir Richard Saltonstall.

" Honoured and dear Sir,

" MY brother Wilson and self do both of us acknowledge your love, as otherwise formerly, so now in the late lines we received from you, that you grieve in spirit to hear daily complaints against us ; it springeth from your compassion for our afflictions therein, wherein we see just cause to desire you may never suffer like injury in yourself, but may find others to compassionate and to condole with you. For when the complaints you hear of are against our tyranny and persecution in fining, whipping, and imprisoning men for their consciences, be pleased to understand we look at

Letter continued.

such complaints as altogether injurious in respect of ourselves, who had no hand or tongue at all to promote either the coming of the persons you aim at into our assemblies, or their punishment for their carriage there. Righteous judgments will not take up reports, much less reports against the innocent. The cry of the sins of Sodom was great and loud, and reached unto heaven, yet the righteous God (giving us an example what to do in the like cases) he would first go down to see whether their crimes were altogether according to their cry, before he would proceed to judgment. Gen. xviii. 20, 21. And when he did find the truth of the cry, he did not wrap up all alike promiscuously in the judgment, but spared such as he found innocent. We are amongst those (if you knew us better) you would account of (as the matron of Israel spoke of herself,) peaceable in Israel, 2 Sam. xx. 19. Yet neither are we so vast in our indulgence of toleration as to think the men you spake of suffered an unjust censure. For one of them, Obadiah Holmes, being an excommunicate person himself out of a church in Plymouth Patent, came into this jurisdiction, and took upon him to baptize, which I think himself will not say he was compelled here to perform. And he was not ignorant that the re-baptizing of an elder person, and that by a private person out of office and under excommunication, are all of them manifest contentions against the order and government of our churches, established *we know* by God's law, and *he knoweth* by the laws of the country. And we conceive we may safely appeal to the ingenuity of your own judgment, whether it would be tolerated in any civil state, for a stranger to come and practise contrary to the known principles of the church estate? As for his whipping, it was more voluntarily chosen by him than inflicted on him. His cen-

Letter continued.

sure by the court was to have paid, as I know, thirty pounds, or else to be whipt; his fine was offered to be paid by friends for him freely; but he chose rather to be whipt; in which case, if his sufferings of stripes was any worship of God at all, surely it could be accounted no better than will-worship. The other, Mr. Clarke, was wiser in that point, and his offence was less, so was his fine less, and himself, as I hear, was contented to have it paid for him, whereupon he was released. The imprisonment of either of them was no detriment. I believe they fared neither of them better at home; and I am sure Holmes had not been so well clad for many years before.

“ But be pleased to consider this point a little farther.— You think to compel men in matter of worship is to make them sin, according to Rom. xiv. 23. If the worship be lawful in itself, the magistrate compelling him to come to it, compelleth him not to sin, but the sin is in his will that needs to be compelled to a Christian duty. Josiah compelled all Israel, or which is all one, made to serve the Lord their God, 2 Chron. xxxiv. 33. Yet his act herein was not blamed, but recorded amongst his virtuous actions. For a governor to suffer any within his gates to profane the sabbath, is a sin against the fourth commandment, both in the private householder, and in the magistrate; and if he requires them to present themselves before the Lord, the magistrate sinneth not, nor doth the subject sin so great a sin as if he did refrain to come. But you say it doth but make men hypocrites, to compel men to conform the outward man for fear of punishment. If he did so, yet better be hypocrites than profane persons. Hypocrites give God part of his due, the outward man, but the profane person giveth God neither outward or inward man. Nevertheless, I tell you the truth,

Remarks on Intolerance.

we have tolerated in our church some Anabaptists, some Antinomians, and some Seekers, and do so still at this day."

We have happily arrived at the period when arguments are not necessary to prove the absurdity of this reasoning.—It is surprising that Mr. Cotton did not recollect the address of the Apostle John when he said, "Master, we saw one casting out devils in thy name, and we forbad him because he followeth not with us." To which the King of Zion replied, "Forbid him not: for he who is not against us is for us." * This severity was not so much the result of their disposition, as of their principles; which, as Sir Richard Saltonstall told them, led them *to strive more for UNIFORMITY than to keep the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace.* UNIFORMITY was the IDOL which they had set up; and while the magistrate was willing to use his sword to compel all to fall down and worship it, they felt no compunction in sacrificing the liberty, the property, the ease, or even the lives of their fellow Christians, rather than it should seem *they were so cold in defence of truth as to tolerate error.*

It is an awful historical fact, a fact written in indelible characters with the blood of thousands, that all denominations of Christians who have enforced the *necessity of uniformity in religion by the sword of the magistrate*, have been all guilty of the dreadful crime of persecuting the followers of Jesus. Regardless of the divine precept, "Learn of me, for I am meek and lowly of heart," they have imitated the worst spirit ever manifested by the apostles of Christ, when they said, "Lord, shall we command fire to come down from heaven and consume them, as Elias did?" † And they have done this as Christians, thinking to do God service;

* Luke ix. 49, 50. † Luke ix. 54.

Mr. Roger Williams leaves England.

and professedly out of regard to divine authority. When the magistrate has been on the side of any who held this principle, they have found no difficulty in proving the *divine right* of their form of church government. Thus the Papists pleaded the *divine right* of Popery, and the universality of the church of Rome.—The English Reformers, who objected to this, soon pleaded for the *divine right* of Episcopacy, and the universality of the church of England.—Many of the Puritans, who dissented on account of these sentiments, no sooner overthrew Episcopacy, but they pleaded for the *divine right* of the Presbytery, and the universality of their provincial assemblies. And the Independants, who had fled to the wilds of America because they would form churches not subject to external controul and influence, were found in their turn pleading the *divine right* of Independency, and the universality of their authority in the province where their churches existed.

The principles we have condemned have long since been laid aside in the government of America. Perhaps this government was the first which did that for religion, which the religion of Jesus Christ claimed from the governments of the world, namely to listen to the sage advice of Gamaliel to the Jews—to LET IT ALONE. For this it appears they are indebted to a Baptist, Mr. Roger Williams, who left England to settle in America in 1631. He had been a minister in the church of England, but left it because he could not conform to the ceremonies and oaths imposed in the establishment. When he came to Boston, he objected also to the force in religious affairs which they exercised there. For speaking against this conduct he was banished from the Massachusetts colony, and after great diffi-

Liberty of Conscience.

culties and hardships founded the town of Providence, and obtained a charter for Rhode Island.

While Mr. Williams was in London to procure this charter in 1644, he published a book called "The bloody tenet of persecution for the cause of conscience." This work appeared to Mr. Cotton of Boston of such dangerous tendency that he published an answer to it in 1647, which he called "The bloody tenet washed and made white in the blood of the Lamb." Mr. Williams replied to this in 1652, and entitled it, "The bloody tenet yet more bloody by Mr. Cotton's endeavour to wash it white." The great principle which Mr. Williams contended for was, "Persons may with less sin be forced to marry whom they cannot love, than to worship where they cannot believe;" and he denied that "Christ had appointed the civil sword as a remedy against false teachers." To which Mr. Cotton replied, "It is evident that the civil sword was appointed for a remedy in this case, Deut. xiii. And appointed it was by that angel of God's presence, whom God promised to send with his people, as being unwilling to go with them himself, Ex. xxxiii. 2, 3.—And that angel was Christ, whom they tempted in the wilderness." 1 Cor. x. 9. And therefore it cannot truly be said, that the Lord Jesus never appointed the civil sword for a remedy in such a case; for he did expressly appoint it in the old testament; nor did he ever abrogate it in the new. The reason of the law, which is the life of the law, is of eternal force and equity in all ages, Thou shalt surely kill him, because he hath sought to thrust thee away from the Lord thy God. Deut. xiii. 9, 10. The reason is of moral, that is, of perpetual equity, to put to death any apostate seducing idolator, or heretic, who seeketh to thrust away the souls of God's people from the Lord their God." *

* Backus's Hist. of America Abridged.

First granted by Mr. Roger Williams.

Mr. Williams clearly saw the result of these principles, and in his work he addressed a letter to Governor Endicot, in which he said, "By your principles and conscience, such as you count heretics, blasphemers, and seducers, must be put to death. You cannot be faithful to your principles and conscience without it." About eight years after this Governor Endicot did put to death four persons, and pleaded conscience for the propriety of his conduct.*

Those who would wish to see more on this subject, may find it in Backus's History of the American Baptists; and if we are not deceived the account which is there given of the principles and spirit manifested by Mr. Williams, will prove this important remark of the author, that "*he established the first government on earth since the rise of Antichrist, which gave equal liberty, civil and religious, to all men therein.*"†

We have dwelt the longer on this subject because these principles were so imperfectly understood at this time. The publishing of Mr. Williams's book in England gave great offence to the Presbyterians, who exclaimed against it as full of heresy and blasphemy. But his principles having been tried, and found to be the soundest policy; both England and America should unite in erecting a monument to perpetuate the name of Roger Williams, as the first governor who ever pleaded that liberty of conscience was the birth-right of every person, and granted it to those who differed in opinion from himself when he had the power to withhold it.

When it is recollected that so early as the year 1615, the Baptists in England pleaded for liberty of conscience as the right of all Christians, in their work entitled, "Persecution judged and condemned:"—that this appears to have been the

* Backus's Hist. of America Abridged. † Ibid.

Letter to Oliver Cromwell.

uniform sentiment of the denomination at large, and that Mr. Williams was very intimate with them at a very early period, which is evident from the manner in which he speaks of Mr. Samuel Howe of London:—It is highly probable that these principles which rendered him such a blessing to America and the world were first maintained and taught by the English Baptists.

CHAP. VII.

A. D. 1653—1660.

THE government was now altered, and, instead of being in the parliament, was vested in a single person. This was the general, Oliver Cromwell, whose title was to be His Highness, Lord Protector of the Commonwealth of England, Scotland, and Ireland, and of the dominions thereunto belonging.

The Baptists in the army seem to have been apprehensive that he entertained designs against them, as appears from the following letter, which we insert, not because we approve of its spirit, but because it may cast some light upon the history of the times. It was probably written by some of his officers, who were envious at his exaltation, and offended that he had deserted his republican sentiments. It is entitled, *A short discovery of his Highness the Lord Protector's intentions touching the Anabaptists in the army, and all such as are against his reforming things in the church; which was first*

Letter continued.

communicated by a Scotch lord who is called Twidle; but is now come to the ear of the Anabaptists: upon which there are propounded thirty five queries for his highness to answer to his conscience. By a well wisher to the Anabaptists' prosperity, and all the rest of the separatists in England.

“ TO HIS HIGHNESS THE LORD PROTECTOR.”

“ My Lord,

“ There is some intelligence abroad, which I desire to communicate in a private way, lest I become a prey to the malice or envy of the roaring lion. But to the matter intended, and that is this :—It seems your highness being discoursing with a Scotch lord, who is called the lord Twidle, you were pleased to say that “ there was something amiss in the church and state, which you would reform as soon as may be. Of those that were amiss in the state, some were done and the rest were doing; and as for those things that were amiss in the church, you hoped to rectify them by degrees, as convenient opportunity presented itself; but before you could do this work, the Anabaptists must be taken out of the army; and this you could not do with sharp corrosive medicines, but it must be done by degrees. From which there are two things observable, 1. The work. 2. The way you intend to do this work.

“ First, to the work; and that is church-work. It seems you intend to follow the steps of them that are gone before, which could not be content to meddle with state affairs, and to make laws and statutes, and *impose* them upon the people as rules of divine worship. And this is the work you intend to be at, under pretence of correcting error, and so to destroy truth.

Letter continued.

“ But who could have thought, when you made your last speech to Parliament, when your tongue was so sweetly tipt for the *liberty of conscience*, reproving the parliament for having a finger on their *brother's conscience*; who could have imagined that then heard you that you would have been so soon at the same trade, unless he had supposed a fountain could have sent forth sweet water and bitter? But,

“ Secondly, the way you intend to take to bring about this design, is two-fold. 1. To purge the army of the *Anabaptists*. 2. To do it by degrees. But, Oliver, is this thy design? And is this the way to be rid of the Anabaptists? And is this the reason, because they hinder the things *amiss* in the church? I confess they have been enemies to the *Presbyterian church government*; and so were you at Dunbar in Scotland; or at least you seemed to be so by your words and actions; for you spake as *pure independency* as any of us all then; and made this an argument why we should fight stoutly; because we had the prayers of the *Independants* and baptized churches. So highly did you seem to love the Anabaptists then, that you did not only invite them into the army, but entertain them in your family; but it seems the case is altered. But, I pray do not deceive yourself, nor let the priests deceive you; for the Anabaptists are men that will not be shuffled out of their birth-rights, as free born people of England. And have they not filled your towns, your cities, your provinces, your islands, your castles, your navies, your tents, your armies, (except that which went to the West Indies, which prospers so well) your court?—your very council is not free; only we have left your temples for yourself to worship in. So that I believe it will be an hard thing to root them out;

Letter continued.

although you tell the Scotch lord you will do it by degrees, as he reports.

“ May it please your highness seriously to consider what hath been said, and answer these ensuing queries to your own conscience :

“ 1. Whether your highness had come to the height of honour and greatness you are now come to, if the Anabaptists, so called, had been so much your enemies as they were your friends ?

“ 2. Whether the Anabaptists were ever unfaithful, either to the commonwealth in general, or to your highness in particular ? And if not, then what is the reason of your intended dismissal ?

“ 3. Whether the Anabaptists be not as honest now as in the year 1650 and 51, and 52, &c. ? And if so, why not as useful now as then ?

“ 4. Whether the Anabaptists are not to be commended for their integrity, which had rather keep faith and a good conscience, although it may lose them their employments, than to keep their employments with the loss of both ?

“ 5. Whether the Anabaptists may not as justly endeavour to eat out the bowels of your government, as your highness may endeavour to eat them out of their employments ?

“ 6. Whether the Anabaptists did not come more justly into their employments in the army, than your highness came into the seat of government ?

“ 7. Whether, if the Anabaptists had the power in their hands, and were as able to cast you out, as you were them, and they did intend it to you as you do to them ; whether, I say, your highness would not call them all knaves ?

“ 8. Whether this be fair dealing in the sight of God and men, to pretend a great deal of love to the Anabaptists, as to

Letter continued.

Major *Pack* and Mr. *Kiffin*, and a hundred more that I could name, when at the same time you intend evil against them?

“ 9. Whether the Anabaptist will not be in a better condition in the day of Christ that keeps his covenant with God and men, than your highness will be if you break with both?

“ 10. Whether an *hundred of the old Anabaptists*, such as marched under your command in 48, 49, 50, &c. be not as good as *two hundred* of your new courtiers, if you were in such a condition as you were at *Dunbar* in Scotland?

“ 11. Whether the cause of the army's defeat in Hispaniola was because there were so many Anabaptists in it? And if so, if that be the only reason why they are so much out of date?

“ 12. Whether your highness hath not changed your former intention, to have an equal respect to the godly, though different in judgment? And if so, whether it be not from the better to the worse?

“ 13. Whether your highness's conscience was not more at peace, and your mind more *set upon things above*, when you loved the Anabaptists, than it is now, when you hate their principles, or their service, or both?

“ 14. Whether your highness's court is not a greater charge to this nation than the Anabaptists in the army? And if so, whether **this** be the ease which you promised the people?

“ 15. Whether there be any disproportion betwixt the state of **things** now, and the state of things in the days of old? And if there be, shew us where it lieth, how, and when?

“ 16. Whether the monies laid out in the making of the new rivers and ponds at *Hampton court*, might not have been

Letter continued.

better bestowed in paying the public faith, or the *Anabaptists'* arrears before their dismissal?

“ 17. Whether it is not convenient for the Anabaptists to provide for their own safety, seeing from you they can expect none?

“ 18. Whether it will be any more treason to fight for our liberties and civil properties in these days, if they be denied us, than it was to fight for them in the days of the king?

“ 19. Whether the *instrument of government* be as the laws of the Medes and Persians that alter not? If so, how is it that Mr. John Biddle is now a prisoner?

“ 20. Whether your highness may not as well violate the whole *instrument of government* as the 37th and 38th articles? If so, what security have the people for their liberty?

“ 21. Whether our liberty doth not wholly depend upon your will, and the will of a future protector, seeing the instrument of government is so little useful? If so, whether our condition be not as bad as ever?

“ 22. Whether you may not as justly suffer all to be put in prison that differ from the church of England, as to suffer Mr. Biddle to be imprisoned?

“ 23. Whether it will not be more abominable to the *Anabaptists*, or *Independants*, or Mr. *Biddle*, or any other professing faith in God by Jesus Christ, and are not disturbers of the civil peace, nor turn their liberty into licentiousness, to suffer for their consciences under your government, that promised liberty to such, than it was to have suffered under the king, that promised them none?

“ 24. Whether your highness will not appear to be a dreadful apostate and fearful dissembler, if you suffer persecution to fall upon the Anabaptists, or Independants, or

Letter continued.

them of Mr. Biddle's judgment, seeing you promised equal liberty to all?

" 25. Whether this will not prove your highness's ruin, if you join with such a wicked principle to persecute for conscience, or to turn men out of the army for being Anabaptists, or for any such thing as differs from the church of England, seeing God hath confounded all such as have done so?

" 26. Whether the *old parliament* was not turned out for leaving undone that which they ought to have done? And if so, whether those things have been done since?

" 27. Whether the *little parliament* was not turned out for doing that which the other left undone; or taking away of tithes and other grievances? And if so, then

" 28. Whether you did not intend your own ends more than you did the nation's good, in breaking the first parliament, and calling the second, and dissolving them again?

" 29. Whether the instrument of government was not preparing eight or nine days before the breaking up of the little parliament? And if so, whether you did not intend their dissolving?

" 30. Whether you did not tell a shameful untruth to the *last parliament*, saying, that you did not know of their dissolving, that is to say the *little parliament*, till they came to deliver up their power to you?

" 31. Whether your highness did not put a slur upon the Lord Lambert, when he should have gone lord-deputy to Ireland, in telling the parliament it savoured too much of a monarchy; and so sent Fleetwood with a lower title?

" 32. Whether your highness do not intend to put another slur upon the Lord Lambert, in sending for the lord-deputy

Letter continued.

to come into England, to make him generalissimo of the armies in England, Scotland, and Ireland?

“ 33. Whether it is not convenient for the Lord Lambert to consider of those actions, and to have an eye to your proceedings, lest by *degrees* you eat him out of all, as you intend to do the Anabaptists?

“ 34. Whether the excessive pride of your family do not call for a speedy judgment from heaven, seeing *pride never goeth without a fall*?

“ 35. Whether the six coach-horses did not give your highness a fair warning of some worse thing to follow, if you repent not, seeing God often forewarns before he strikes home?—

THE CONCLUSION.

“ My Lord,

“ MY humble request is, that you will seriously consider of these few lines, although you may dislike the way by which they are communicated, yet let the matter sink deep into your heart; for these things should have met you in another manner, had not your highness cast off all such friendly communication by word of mouth, and the persons too, if they did but tell you plainly their minds. And take heed of casting away old friends for new acquaintance, as Rehoboam did, who forsook the counsel of his good old friends, and consulted with his young courtiers; which caused the ten tribes to revolt from him.* And it is a deadly sign of a speedy ruin, when a prince or a state casts off the interests of the people of God; as you may see how Joash forsook the people and the house of God, and then his house fell before a few of the Assyrians, and at last his own servants conspired against him, and slew him.

* 1 Kings 12, 3.

Government favourable to religious liberty.

“ And therefore, O Cromwell! leave off thy wicked design of casting off the interest of the people of God; and “let my counsel be acceptable to thee; and break off thy sins by righteousness, and thy iniquity by shewing mercy to the poor, and it may be a lengthening out of thy tranquility.” For “it is not strength united with policy, but righteousness accompanied with strength, that must keep alive your interest with God and the people. And when both these die, that is to say righteousness and sincerity, then adieu to thy greatness here, and thy eternal happiness hereafter.

“ From him who wishes your happiness so long as you do well.

“ Printed for the information of all such as prize the liberty of their consciences, for which so much blood has been spilt.” *

The change of government, however, appears to have been, generally speaking, favourable to religious liberty. In the instrument of government we find the following liberal sentiments. “ That the Christian religion contained in the scriptures be held forth and recommended as the public profession of these nations; and that, as soon as may be, a provision less subject to contention, and more certain than the present, be made for the maintenance of ministers, and that till such provision be made, the present maintenance continue.

“ That none be compelled to conform to the public religion by penalties or otherwise; but that endeavours be used to win them by sound doctrine, and the example of a good conversation.

“ That such as profess faith in God by Jesus Christ, though differing in judgment from the doctrine, worship, and discipline, publicly held forth, shall not be restrained from, but

* Crosby, vol. iii. p. 231—242.

Triers appointed.

shall be protected in the profession of their faith and exercise of their religion, so as they abuse not this liberty to the civil injury of others, and to the actual disturbance of the public peace on their parts; provided this liberty be not extended to popery or prelacy, or to such as, under a profession of Christ, hold forth and practise licentiousness.

“That all laws, statutes, ordinances, and clauses in any law, statute, or ordinance, to the contrary of the aforesaid liberty, shall be esteemed null and void.” *

It is evident from these principles, which may be considered as the basis of the protector's government, so far as respects ecclesiastical affairs, that it was his wish to make all the religious parties easy. “He indulged the army (says Neal) in their enthusiastic raptures, and sometimes joined in their prayers and sermons. He countenanced the Presbyterians, by assuring them that he would maintain the public ministry, and give them all due encouragement. He supported the Independants, by making them his chaplains, by preferring them to considerable livings in the church and universities, and by joining them in one commission with the Presbyterians, as Triers of all who desired to be admitted to benefices.—But he absolutely forbid the clergy of every denomination to deal in politics, as not belonging to their profession; and when he perceived that the managing Presbyterians took too much upon them, he always found means to mortify them, and would sometimes glory that he had curbed that insolent sect which would suffer none but itself.”

Amongst the names of the “Triers” we find three of the Baptist denomination. These were Mr. John Tombes, B. D. Mr. Henry Jessey, and Mr. Daniel Dyke.† This nomination was doubtless designed to bring all parties into the parish

* Neal, vol. iv. p. 74.

† Ibid. vol. iv. p. 103.

Baptist ministers Triers.

churches. In a letter to the States General, preserved in Thurloe's state papers, it is said, "It is also firmly agreed that the bishops and the Anabaptists shall be admitted into it, as well as the Independants and Presbyterians; yet with this proviso, that they shall not dispute one another's *principia*, but labour to agree in union; and it is believed that that the effects thereof will be seen in a short time."* These principles were acted on respecting the Baptists, as the commissioners agreed to receive them as brethren, and resolved that if any of them applied to them for probation, and appeared in other respects duly qualified, they should not be rejected for holding this opinion.

Though it is probable that some of the Baptist ministers were brought into the proposed establishment, yet many of them disliked these proceedings, and protested against them in a work published in 1654, entitled, *A declaration of several of the churches of Christ, and godly people in and about the city of London, concerning the kingly interest of Christ, and the present sufferings of his cause and saints in England.* They say—"Are not the new court of 'Triers at Whitehall for ministers, of like make with the High commission court? The graven image of the worldly power, creating a worldly clergy for worldly ends; highly scandalous; against the rule of the gospel and the faith of Christ; and as much to be exploded as the pope and the prelate? Notwithstanding they assume the title of orthodox, and soundness of opinion, to themselves; and on that account charge others who are not one with them in their carnal and antichristian interests, with errors and rashness?"† To enforce these sentiments they say—"And the Lord General Cromwell in his letter to the Kirk Assembly from

* Neal, vol. ii. p. 67.

† Declar. p. 5.

Baptist churches offended.

Dunbar saith, ‘It is worth considering how those ministers take into their hands the instruments of a foolish shepherd, that meddle with worldly politics, or earthly powers, to set up what they call the kingdom of Christ; which indeed is neither it, nor, if it were, would such means be found effectual to that end; and neglect, and not trust to the word of God, and the sword of the Spirit.’ *

This declaration was agreed on by a large assembly, and signed by a great many names, both in London and the country. Of these last they say, that the hundreds out of Kent, and all in the country, were omitted, and that only a hundred and fifty were selected out of the original copy, and published in the name of the rest. Ten of these are said to be “of the church that walks with Mr. Feak, now close prisoner for this cause of Christ at Windsor Castle; seven in the name of the church that walks with Doctor Chamberlain; twenty-five in the name of the whole body that walks with Mr. Rogers, now prisoner for this cause at Lambeth; thirteen, of the church that walks with Mr. Raworth; fourteen, with Mr. Knollys; nine, of the church that walks with Mr. Simpson; twelve of the church that walks with Mr. Jessey; twenty-two, of the church that walks with Mr. Barebone; eighteen, of the church that walks with Lieu. Col. Fenson; and thirteen, of the church that walks with Justice Highland.† — Ordered by the Assembly the 30th day of the sixth month. (August) 1654.”

These churches were composed of those persons who were generally called fifth-monarchy men. They are represented by Neal as “high enthusiasts, who were in expectation of King Jesus, and of a glorious thousand years reign with Christ upon earth.” ‡ Bishop Burnet says, “They were for

* Declar. p. 6. † Ibid. p. 21. ‡ Thurloe’s state papers, vol. i. p. 621.

Violent Republicans.

pulling down churches, for discharging tithes, and leaving religion free (as they called it), without either encouragement or restraint. Most of them were for destroying the clergy, and for breaking every thing that looked like a national establishment."

We ought not fully to rely upon this representation, but should consider that it is made by a bishop of the church of England. By leaving religion free, we ought perhaps to understand nothing more than what all consistent dissenters plead for, namely, that there should be no imposition in religion, that every one should be left to liberty of conscience and the right of private judgment; and that Jesus Christ is the only head of his church. And by destroying the clergy, and breaking up every thing that looked like a national establishment, it is not necessary that external violence to be employed against them should be understood; but only that if these sentiments universally prevailed, the clergy of the church of England would have no hearers, and national establishments would fall for want of support.

It is certain, however, that they objected very much to the governments being settled in a single person: they were of the commonwealth party, and were some of the protector's determined enemies, when they found that, after all the opposition which had been made to monarchy, they were again called upon to acknowledge it, though under a different name.

The chief of these amongst the Baptist ministers were Feak, Simpson, Rogers, and Vavasor Powell. By some intercepted letters in Thurloe's state papers, it appears that they were very violent in their opposition. "The Anabaptists (it is said in one of them) are highly enraged against the protector, insomuch that Vavasor Powell and Feak on Sunday last in Christ-church publicly called him the dissemi-

Republicans Imprisoned.

blingest perjured villain in the world ; and desired that if any of his friends were there, they would go and tell him what they said ; and withal, that his reign was but short, and that he should be served worse than that great tyrant, the last lord protector was, he being altogether as bad, if not worse, than he." In another it is said—" I know not whether you have formerly heard of the Monday's lecture at Blackfriar's, where three or four of the Anabaptistical men preach constantly with very great bitterness against the present government, but especially against his excellency, calling him the man of sin, the old dragon, and many other scripture ill-names. The chief of them is one Feak, a bold and crafty orator, and of high reputation among them."

The Protector thought it necessary, in order to support his authority, to order these malcontents to be taken into custody. Mr. Powell and Mr. Feak were apprehended December 21, 1653. The writer adds, " I am just now assured, and from one that you may believe, that Harrison, Vavasor Powell, and Mr. Feak have been all this day before his Highness and the council, and that Powell and Feak are this evening sent to prison, and Harrison hath his commission taken from him."* This was Major General Harrison, who appears to have been at the head of those Baptists who were for a commonwealth, and who disapproved of the parish churches. Mr. Baxter says, " Cromwell connived at his old friend Harrison while he made himself the head of the Anabaptists and fanatics here, till he saw that it would be an acceptable thing to suppress him ; and then he doth it easily in a trice, and maketh him contemptible, who but yesterday thought himself not much below him."†

* State Papers, vol. i. p. 641. † Baxter's Life, p. 74.

Baptists in Ireland.

This discontent spread itself to Ireland. In Thurloe's State Papers it is said—"Upon the first hearing of this, many of the Anabaptists here were much troubled, principally because of the title *Lord Protector*, as they think this applicable to God alone." In a letter from Henry Cromwell to Secretary Thurloe, dated March 8, 1653, it is said—"All are quiet here, except a few inconsiderable persons of the Anabaptist's judgment, who also are quiet, though not very well contented; but I believe they will receive much satisfaction from a letter very lately come to their hands from Mr. Kiffin and Mr. Spilsbury, in which they have dealt very homely and plainly with those of that judgment here."*

It is likely that those who were dissatisfied with this change in the government were persons in the army.—But of the Baptists in general at that period in Ireland a very honourable character is given in the following letter, dated April 5, 1654, addressed to Secretary Thurloe, which says, "As to the grand affairs in Ireland, especially as it relates to the Anabaptist party, I am confident they are much misconceived in England. Truly I am apt to believe that upon the change of affairs, here was discontent, but very little animosity. Upon the sabbath a congregation may be discovered of which Mr. Patient is pastor." In another, speaking of Mr. Blackwood, it is said—"This man is now fixed with the congregation at Dublin, and Mr. Patient appointed an evangelist, to preach up and down the country."†

Having mentioned the Baptists in Ireland, whose ministers in general had gone from England, we are happy that we are able to introduce some letters which were sent from them in this year, and but a few months after

* State Papers, vol ii. p. 149. † vol. iii. p. 90.

Baptist Churches in Wales.

the Protector was proclaimed, which fully develope their characters and principles. In these Mr. Blackwood and Mr. Patient, the excellency of whose characters are well known, appear to be principal persons. With the time of their leaving England for Ireland we are unacquainted; but it is probable by the number of churches at this period in that land of superstition, that they had been settled there for several years.

In order to introduce this, so as to preserve the chain of our history, we must make a digression, and glance at the origin of those churches in Wales with whom they held correspondence.

In 1649, about four years before this time, two persons, Mr. John Miles and Mr. Thomas Proud, who had been brought to the knowledge of the truth in the principality, came to London, that they might obtain clearer views of the doctrines and discipline of the church of Christ. When arrived at London, they attended with a Baptist church meeting at Glazier's-hall, in Broad-street, and from thence called the church at the Glass-house.

The elders were Mr. William Consett, and Mr. William Draper. It is very remarkable, and deserves particular notice, that this church immediately before their coming had observed a day of fasting and prayer, to implore "the Lord of the harvest that he would send forth labourers into his harvest;" especially into the dark parts of the land. When these strangers made known their design, they were well received, and continued with them a fortnight, during which it is supposed they were baptized. Returning into their own country, they were made instrumental in gathering a church about Ilston, which it is probable was the first church that admitted none but baptized believers to fellowship; the

Correspondence between the English and Welsh.

churches founded prior to this by Messrs. Cradock, Jones, and Powell, being on the plan of mixed communion.

Though we have no intention to give the history of the Welsh Baptists, yet it is necessary to introduce some letters which were sent from the church at the glass-house to the churches at and about Ilston, to throw light on our English history. For these letters we are indebted to the valuable manuscripts of Mr. Joshua Thomas, and published by him in the Welsh language. The first of these was written in 1650, and is as follows:—

“ Beloved in the Lord in Christ our Head,

“ WE salute you, praying daily for you, that God would be pleased to make known his grace to you, so that you may be made able to walk before him in holiness, and without blame all your days. We assure you it is no small joy to us to hear of the goodness of God to you-ward, that now the scriptures again are made good, namely, to those who sit in darkness God hath wonderfully appeared; even to you whose habitations were in dark corners of the earth. The Lord grant that we may acknowledge his goodness in answering prayers, for we dare boldly affirm it to be so, for we have poured out our souls to God, that he would enlighten the dark corners of the land, and that to those who sit in darkness God would arise, and God hath arisen indeed.— We cannot but say that God sent over brother Miles to us; we having prayed that God would give to us some who might give themselves to the work of the Lord in those places where he had work to do; and we cannot but acknowledge it before the Lord, and pray that it may be more than ordinary provocation to us to call upon our own hearts, and upon each other's hearts, to call upon that God who hath

Welsh Correspondence continued.

stiled himself a God hearing prayer. And now, brethren, we pray and exhort you to walk worthy of the mercies of God, who hath appeared to you; and that you exhort one another daily to walk with God with an upright heart, keeping close to him in all your ways, and to go forward, pressing hard after the mark for the prize of the high calling which is in Christ Jesus. The Lord grant that you may be strengthened against the wiles of that evil and subtle enemy of our salvation, knowing that he and his servants turn themselves into glorious shapes, and make great pretences, speaking swelling words of vanity, endeavouring to beguile souls: but blessed be God, we hope you are not ignorant of his devices.—Time would fail us to tell you how many ways many have been ensnared and fallen; yet praised be his name, many have escaped his snares, even as a bird from the hand of the cunning fowler. So committing you to God and the word of his grace, we take leave, subscribing ourselves,

“ Your brethren in the faith
and fellowship of Christ,
according to the Gospel,
“ WILLIAM CONSETT.
EDWARD CRESSETT.
JOSEPH STAFFORD.
EDWARD ROBERTS.
JOHN HARMAN.
ROBERT BOWES.”

There is mention made of another letter from the church at the glass-house to the church at Llanharan, dated the 12th of the eleventh month, 1650. This was signed by William Consett, Sam. Larke, Peter Scutts, Robert Bowes,

Welsh Correspondence continued.

Robert Doyley, Edward Roberts, T. Harrison, Richard Bartlett, Henry Gigg, Edward Green, John Bradg, and Edward Druit.

Another letter was addressed to the church at the Hay, and signed by several of the above, and by Richard Graves, William Comby, Thomas Carter, Robert Stayner, Peter Row, R. Cherry, Ralph Manwaring, William Haines, and Nathan Allen.

They also sent a letter to the church at Carmarthan, and another about this time to that at Ilston. In this last they made many enquiries after their order and discipline, saying, "We would know of any whether those who have not been by water baptized into Christ have put on Christ in the account of the scripture. 1. Whether baptism by water be not an ordinance of Christ, expressly commanded by him to be practised by saints in the day of the gospel?—2. Whether it be not the duty of every believer to be obedient to every command of Christ in his word?—3. Whether it be not sinful and disorderly for any who profess themselves disciples of Christ to live in the neglect of a plain and positive command?—4. Whether the scripture commands not a withdrawing from every brother that walketh disorderly?—5. Whether Christ be not as faithful in his house as Moses was? and whether Christ's commands under the gospel be not to be observed with as much care?"

In 1651 the Baptist churches in Wales sent letters by their messenger Mr. John Miles, to the Baptist church in London meeting at Glazier's-hall. In those letters the churches gave a good account of their comfortable state, being in peace, harmony, many added, &c. The church in London in reply sent them an affectionate letter, advising and confirming them in the truth.

Baptist Ministers go to Ireland.

“ In this letter I find (says Mr. Thomas) the following paragraph :

“ Regarding the distance of your habitations, we advise— If you experience that God hath endowed you with gifts whereby ye may edify one another, and keep up proper order and ministry in the church of Christ ; then we judge you may separate into more distinct congregations, provided it be done with mutual consent ; and if there be among you those who may, in some measure, take the oversight of you in the Lord. But if not, we believe it will be more for the honour of Christ for you to continue together, and meet every first day, as many as conveniently can, and once in the week to pray and prophecy, (prophesying, says Mr. T. they then called an exhortation or expounding) and when they can for all to meet together to break bread, though that may not be every first day, for undoubtedly God will have mercy and not sacrifice.”

This letter was signed by William Consett, William Combey, William Chassey, Samuel Tull, Edward Green, Joseph Stafford, Robert Cherry, Thomas Carter, John Mildmay, &c.*

It appears that on some occasion both Mr. Draper and Mr. Consett, the pastors of the church at Glazier's-hall, went to Ireland, and also two other persons mentioned in these letters, Mr. Peter Row and Mr. Edward Roberts.— From this circumstance we account for the intimacy that subsisted between the several churches of England, Ireland, and Wales, mentioned in the correspondence to which we have alluded, and which we now present to our readers.

In 1653, an epistle was sent from Dublin by a member of that church named VERNON, to the churches of London

* History of the Baptist Association by Joshua Thomas, p. 8.

Correspondence of the Irish and English.

under the care of Messrs. Kiffin, Spilsbury, and others.—
The following is a copy :

*The Churches of Christ in Ireland, united together, reside
in the several places following :—*

1. DUBLIN—With whom are the brethren, Patient, Law, Vernon, Roberts, Smith, and several others, who walk comfortably together, through grace.
2. WATERFORD—With whom are the brethren, Wade, Row, Boulton, Cawdron, Longdon, with several others : most of them being resident there, we trust, are in a thriving condition in their spiritual state.
3. CLONMELL—With whom are the brethren Charles and Draper, and sometimes Hutchinson and Bullock to assist them. Some other brethren are scattered in several other places in those parts, who are recommended to the care of our friends at Clonmell, who are nearest to them.
4. KILKENNY—They have the brethren, Blackwood, Caxe, Axtell, Gough, with several others, who we hope also are in a growing condition, and walk orderly.
5. CORK—With whom are the brethren Lamb, Coleman, and several others, who walk orderly together, though in a place of much opposition by such as slight the ways of the Lord ; with whom also are in communion some friends at Brand Kingsale, and other parts of the country.
6. LIMERICK—With whom are brethren, Knight, Uzell, Skinner, and some others, who we fear are in a decaying condition, for want of able brethren to strengthen them ; brother Knight having been weak, so not able to be much with them.

Irish Correspondence.

7. GALLOWAY—Have the brethren, Clarke, Davis, &c. who, we understand, do walk orderly, but have few able among them to edify the body.

8. WEXFORD—And a people lately gathered by brother Blackwood, with whom are the brethren Tomlins, Hussey, Neale, Biggs, &c. who have not much help among themselves, but are sometimes visited by Waterford friends.

9. In the North, near CARRICK FERGUS, are several lately received by brother Reade, who were baptized here by brother Patient, who, we understand, are valuable, but want some able brethren to establish them.

10. KERRY—Where are some friends received lately by brother Dix, Velson, and Browne: and brother Chawbers speaks to them. Of these we have not much experience; but have lately heard by brother Chawbers, that they walk orderly.—We know not of any particular friends scattered abroad in the country, but who are committed to the place of some friends near them, who, we hope, as they are able, will discharge their duty towards them.

N. B. Friends deceased, &c. at the several places and churches before mentioned follow:—At *Waterford*, sister Watson, sister Mary Row; at *Kilkenny*, sister Deare; at *Clonmell*, brother Brooks; at or near *Limerick*, brother Brooks, brother Cooper, and brother Rush; several cast out for sin. At *Clonmell*, brother Dix, Clayton, Price, Thornhill, and Francis; at *Kilkenny*, brother Fogg, one at *Galloway*; and some at *Limerick*, a particular account of whom we have not at present. Sister Sarah Barret, at *Dublin*, some time servant to brother Patient, is now coming for England. Brother Vernon can particularly inform you of her.

Letter from Ireland.

COPY OF A LETTER SENT FROM THE CHURCHES IN
IRELAND TO THE BRETHREN IN ENGLAND.

Dear Friends!

WE cannot, without much shame, speak of our long silence to you; nor without much grief think of yours to us, which we earnestly desire may be mutually laid to heart by us all, to prevent the like occasion of complaint for the future. Surely it is a needful wholesome word, *to exhort one another daily*. Heb iii. 13. Had it been more in our hearts, it would have been more in our mouths, in the several opportunities we have had of corresponding together upon more common, but less profitable affairs. Oh! how many packets have passed filled with worldly matters, since we have heard one word from you, or you from us, of the condition, increase, growth or decrease of God's Israel, who were some years since brought low through oppressions, afflictions, and sorrow! His hand has been still stretched forth to set his poor despised ones on high: Yea, God hath done great things for us, for which we ought greatly to rejoice; but how little have we wisely considered of his doings! for which we have meet cause to mourn, but have not observed nor feelingly laid them to heart. How many have been broken, who have been gathered together against Zion, and fallen for her sake! Surely, were we not hardened through the deceitfulness of sin, our hearts would be more awakened, and all that is within us, to bless his holy name, who hath so blasted the wisdom and power of men, when it hath been opposite to the work which our God is carrying on in the earth; which, as we have clearly seen, we have

Letter Continued.

soon forgotten, through the carnality which we have suffered too much to prevail in our mortal bodies.

Precious friends! let us, in this our day, search and examine our hearts, by the light of the word and spirit of our God; and surely we shall find, that the posture of those poor virgins in Matt. xxv. hath been too much ours: For while our bridegroom tarrieth, do we not all slumber and sleep? so that little difference is discerned between the foolish and the wise. Alas! Alas! what means the dull, cold, estranged frame of heart we bear each to the other, as before mentioned? And is it not the like to our God? Doth it not appear by our little zeal for him, and less delight in his ways, with constant complainings, and little sense of our victory? Our leanness, our dryness, our barrenness are now instead of the songs of Sion. Doth not the Lord call aloud to professors, *Prepare! Be awake to meet your God, O Israel!* Yea, doth he not pronounce woes against them that are at ease in Sion? Doubtless, expecting, that while these turnings, overturnings and changes are in the earth, we should stand upon our watch-tower, enter into our chambers, and be a holy, praying, humble, and praising people: For, surely, now, if ever, we are especially called upon to put on the whole armour of God, that we may be able to stand in this evil day, and having done all to stand. We therefore desire to revive your memory and our own with those known and approved scriptures, Eph. vi. 10—17. Beloved brethren and sisters! we, even with tears, beg for you and for ourselves, that all and each of us may in truth of heart be retiredly exercised in recounting and calling to mind what the Lord hath done for our souls and for our bodies, for his people in general, and what he is doing, and what great and precious things he tells us are in his heart, and which he

Letter Continued.

is resolved speedily to accomplish; wherein, and in expectation of which, he calls upon us thus, Isai. lxxv. 18. *Be ye glad and rejoice for ever in that which I create: for, behold, I create Jerusalem a rejoicing, and her people a joy.*—We recommend unto you the preceding and following verses.

Dearly beloved brethren! The Lord engaged our hearts with the rest of the churches of Christ in the faith and order of the gospel in this kingdom, jointly, as one person, to wait upon him by fasting, humiliation, prayer, and supplication, with a sense of our great shortness of, and unsuitableness to what is in the inclosed particulars expressed; which we also tenderly offer, and, as our resolutions, direct and recommend unto you, our fellow-members and followers of the Lamb, our Lord Jesus Christ; being hopefully assured this will be a means of our recovery from a slippery and slothful condition, which hath brought us too much to realize the character in Prov. xxiv. 30. &c.

Precious friends! The Lord hath given us comfortable hope, that in the prosecution hereof, he will, through his mighty working by his blessed Spirit, prepare us for every condition; yea, if he should bring upon us such a trial as hath not yet been seen in our days; or should this be the dawning of his blessed day, so much promised, yet too little hoped for; however he will hasten it in his time, Isai. lx. 22—We, for our conveniency, have agreed to keep the first Wednesday in every month, from six to six, which, with other breathing of our hearts, we have committed to the care and trust of our beloved and faithful brother JOHN VERNON, *the bearer hereof*, who, through the Lord's blessing, will be suddenly with you, and will also acquaint you with our state and condition. He is in full communion with us. His conversation hath been in zeal and faithfulness; the Lord having

Letter Continued.

put it into the hearts of *all* his congregations in Ireland to have a more revived correspondence with each other by letters and loving epistles, in which practice we found great advantage, not only by weakening Satan's suggestions and jealousies, but it hath brought a closer union and knitting of heart; and, which is not an inferior consideration, we have hereby been enabled feelingly and knowingly to present *each others* wants and conditions before our God. In the same manner, we shall be better enabled to answer our duty towards *you*, and *you* towards *us*, and so bear each others burdens, and fulfil the law of Christ in our very near relation.

We hereby *earnestly request* the same brotherly correspondence with you and from you; and *by your means*, with all the rest of the churches of Christ, in ENGLAND, SCOTLAND, and WALES; whom we trust you will provoke to the same things, which we hope may be mutually obtained once in three months. You may remember our earnest request to you some time since, which request was made once and again, to *have a perfect account of the churches of Christ owned in communion with you, in the places before mentioned.* Had that desire been answered, it might have prevented our long sad silence, and the danger of receiving or refusing such as ought, or ought not to enjoy communion. We offer one request more unto you, if it hath not been lately practised; which is, that you would send two or more faithful brethren, well acquainted with the discipline and order of the Lord's house; and that may be able to speak seasonable words, suiting the necessities of his people; *to visit, comfort, and confirm all the flock of Our Lord Jesus*, that are, or have given up their names to be, under his rule and government, in ENGLAND, SCOTLAND, and WALES. And for the small handful in this nation owned by the Lord, we trust it

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Letter Continued.

shall be our care more naturally to look after and watch over them than heretofore; and the rather, because we have observed Satan our subtle enemy, (whose time we believe is short) by his depths and wiles, taking opportunity, by the peace and rest lent us by our God, ready to slay us, by casting us into carnal security, ever lulling our hearts to sleep, even in this hour, wherein, as before noted, we are especially called upon to be a praying watchful people, for surely the Lord is now at hand; therefore let us leave the beggarly pursuit of the things of this world, and let our moderation be known unto all men. Let our requests be made to our God for Sion, for each soul therein, for all the particulars herein mentioned, for the peace and tranquility of the nation wherein we live, Jer. xxix. 7. and for the rulers and magistrates the Lord hath set over us, particularly for those with you. We should pray earnestly that judgments may be averted, privileges prized, as well as continued; and that we may understand and attend to the voice of God in his providence, particularly in his sore snatching and removing from us, not only useful members in Sion, but even our eyes, our hands, and our hearts; the never-to-be-forgotten young Draper, dear Consett, precious Pocke, useful Saffery, and that in the midst of their days, and the beginning of wondrous works. Oh, dear friends, were they too holy, too heavenly for our society! or did we abuse the mercy; some doting upon them, while others slighted, yea hardly took notice that there were prophets among them; or may we not all conclude that our indifferency, worldly-mindedness, and heart-hypocrisy, are so great, and have so highly provoked our God, that he is coming forth against us in displeasure with visitations and scourges, and therefore hath called home his chosen ones, that they may not see the evil that is coming upon us, nor stand in the gap?

Letter Continued.

And now, dear brethren, beloved of the Lord, let there never be any more occasion so much as to name this sad subject of silence amongst us; but rather let us be constant provokers of each other to every good word and work, by epistles, by our holy, humble, persevering, Christian conversation; following that precious and ever to be remembered example, our Lord Jesus Christ. And seeing that nothing can separate, neither height nor depth, between us and the everlasting love of our heavenly Father, in his dear Son, and those inestimable mansions prepared for us, where we for ever shall behold the glorious face of our God, and jointly sing the everlasting song of Moses and the Lamb: Oh, then let neither sea nor land, things present nor things to come, separate us from a Christian correspondence, whereby we may knowingly mourn with those that mourn, and rejoice with those that rejoice—that we may sympathizingly, in faith, offer supplications and praises, answerable to the dealings of our God with any of his members.—Finally, brethren, farewell! be perfect, be of good comfort, be of one mind, &c. and the God of peace shall be with you.

Your poor brethren, yet fellow-heirs of the consolation ready to be revealed at the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ.

The names of the brethren who suscribed this Letter: —

At Waterford.

ROBERT RINGSTON,
THOMAS SHELSON,
THOMAS CAWDRON,
EDWARD MARSHALL,
PETER ROW,
ROBERT MERRY,

THOMAS BOULTON
THOMAS SPARKLING,
JOHN THOMAS,
JOHN ROW,
WILLIAM LEIGH,
RICHARD LEIGH.

Resolutions adopted.

At Kilkenny.

ANTHONY HARRISON, CHRIST. BLACKWOOD,
 JOHN PRATT, RICHARD WOOD,
 HUMPHREY PRICHARD, JOHN COURT,
 THOMAS ALSOP, ARNOLD THOMAS.

At Dublin.

JAMES HARDISH, EDWARD ROBERTS,
 HENRY JONES, PHIL. CARCHEROL,
 JAMES MARELY, THOMAS PATIENT,
 WILLIAM SANDS, NICO. SCOTT,
 WILLIAM SAULT, ADRIAN STRONG.

From the Church of Christ at *Waterford*, being now assembled upon the ground within mentioned, 1st day of the 4th month, [June] 1653.

THE churches of Christ in IRELAND, walking in the faith and order of the gospel, do agree together, through divine assistance, to set apart the first fourth day, called Wednesday, in every month, solemnly to seek the face of our God; and by fasting and prayer humbly to mourn before him for the things following; which is also recommended to our dear friends in England, and scattered brethren in several places, who have obtained like precious faith with us.

1. Our little knowledge of, and less trusting in the name of our God in Christ, so as to set him for ever before our eyes, that we may glorify him both in our bodies and souls, which are his, 1 Cor. vi. 20. Heb v. 12.

2. Our little sincere love to the Lord and his people, and our little knowledge of the office and proper place of each

Resolutions adopted.

member, as God hath set him in the body of Christ; to the end that every particular member may be now effectually improved, for the mutual edification of the whole, 1 Cor. xii. 19, 20, 21, &c. Eph. iv. 16.

3. Our little serious searching into the word of God, and not substantially acquainting ourselves with the foundation truths revealed therein, 2 Tim. iii. 15. 1 Pet. ii. 2. Rom. i. 16, 17.

4. Our little faith in the great and precious promises of the Lord, which are to be fulfilled in the last days, Luke xviii. 8. 2 Pet. i. 4.

5. Our little pressing toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus: and our inordinate affections after earthly things, Luke x. 40, 41. Phil. iii. 14. Col. iii. 1, 2.

6. Our little praying and praising frame of heart; in particular, for faithful labourers in the Lord's vineyard: and for all whom he hath put in authority over us, under whom we have had much opportunity to practise the truth we profess, Mat. ix. 37, 38. John xv. 4. Psal. xxii. 3. 1 Cor. ii. 4. 1 Tim. ii. 2. 1 Pet. ii. 14. Isai. ix. 7.

7. Our little concern for the sufferings of the people of God, Luke xviii. 7. Rev. xvii. 6.

8. Our great aptness to forget the things God hath done for us, and to abuse the many precious mercies God hath multiplied upon us.

9. Our little laying to heart the great breaches the Lord hath made among us, by removing many righteous ones from us.

10. Our want of spiritual wisdom to reprove sin plainly in all without respect of persons, and to exhort faithfully, so as to stop the mouths of gainsayers, and give no just offence to any.

Correspondence of the English and Welch.

11. Our little mourning for sin, both in ourselves and in others, Ezek. ix. 4. Hos. iv. 12.

12. Our great ignorance of the deceitfulness of our own hearts, Jer. xvii. 9, 10.

These things, among many others, ought to be sufficient grounds of our lying low before the Lord, that he may lift us up in due time, and supply all our wants according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus, James iv. 3. 9, 10. Phil. iv. 19.*

This letter produced such an effect on some of the churches in London, that they immediately took it into consideration: and from a conviction of its importance, after keeping a day of fasting and prayer, agreed to adopt its suggestions, and to enclose it with a letter to the churches in Wales, which was as follows: —

“Dearly beloved Brethren!

“WHILE we were slumbering and sleeping, like those wise virgins mentioned by our Saviour in Matt. xxv. regardless of the obligations and engagements to the Lord, which, by so many eminent and signal discoveries of love and works of wonder, wrought for us in these last days, he hath laid upon us; it hath pleased the Keeper of Israel, who neither slumbers nor sleeps, to raise up a quickening spirit in the hearts of our brethren of *Ireland*, provoking them to call upon us to awake to righteousness, to remember our first love, to rend our hearts and not our garments, and to turn to the Lord with our whole hearts; that doing our first work, we may receive an answer of peace from the God of Peace; and healing of all our wounds from him, whose property is to heal backslidings, and to love freely; and that the weak among us may be strong as David,

* Thomas's Hist. of Welch Association.

English Letter.

and David as an angel of God. We have sent you enclosed a copy of what we received from them, which we pray the Lord to sanctify unto you, as in some measure he hath done to us; that it may serve through the operation of the Spirit, as Nathan's parable to David, and as the cock-crowing to Peter, to bring to your remembrance all that deadness, unfruitfulness, want of love, and unsuitableness of spirit, which have too much prevailed in you and upon you, to the grieving of the Spirit of God, to the hardening of such as know not the Lord, and the wounding of each others hearts in these times of gospel peace and liberty. We desire you to communicate the same to all our brethren near you; and with all convenient speed, not only to certify us what effect the subject therein contained hath wrought upon your hearts, but also to send us a particular account of their and your state and condition, relating to your communion with each other, as grounded upon your fellowship with the Father and the Son, in the faith of the gospel of Christ. In order thereto, we entreat your care and pains in visiting the several weak and scattered brethren in your parts, that from a thorough knowledge of, and acquaintance with their present standing, we may receive information from you; and our brethren in Ireland, according to their desire, from us; what churches and societies we may groundedly communicate with, according to the rule of Christ. We shall not offer arguments to persuade you to compliance with our brethren's desire and ours; their arguments carry so much evidence and demonstration of truth, necessity and suitableness to the Gospel rule, in the very first view of them. We have already kept a day of holy fasting and prayer, upon the grounds therein expressed; and trust we shall never lay down our spiritual weapons, till satan, the world, and the lusts of our flesh, be

Letter Continued.

made our footstool; which the Lord hasten, for Christ's sake! to whose fatherly care and tuition we commend you, and subscribe ourselves,

“ Your affectionate brethren in the faith

“ and fellowship of the gospel,

“ WILLIAM KIFFIN,

HENRY HILLS,

EDWARD HARRISON,

JOHN PERRY,

THOMAS WHITE,

RICHARD TREDWELL,

JOSEPH SANSOM,

ROBERT BOWES,”

THOMAS COOPER.

“ Our great design in this letter is to obtain a full account of all the churches in *England, Scotland, and Wales*; therefore we desire you will inform us not only concerning your own state, but the state of any churches that are in your country, or near adjacent; that if it be possible we may have the full knowledge of all those that are one with us in the sound principles of truth: and to yourselves, or any other church of Christ, we shall be ready to give the like account, if desired, of ourselves, or the churches near us.

“ From the several Churches of Christ in London, the
24th day of the 5th Month, 1653.

PETER SCUTT, or SCOTT.*

Mr. Scutt, the writer of this letter, it will be seen by turning to page 237, as well as Robert Bowes were members of the church at the Glass House. It is probable they succeeded Messrs. Consett and Draper who appear to have laboured and died in Ireland. The manner in which they speak of these persons proves that they had been eminently useful, and that they were taken away in early life; and subse-

* Hist. of Welch Association,

Letter from Ireland to Wales.

quent events fully justified their conclusion that the Lord had taken away these righteous men from the evil to come.

We know nothing further of the state of the churches in Ireland, till the year 1656, when a letter was sent by them to the churches at Ilston and Llantrisant in Glamorganshire; which we insert to preserve the thread of our history.

Dublin 12th, 4th Month, 1656.

“ Dear Brethren,

“ WE wish you a more deep rooting and establishing in the faith, that no storms of persecution on the one hand, nor error nor heresy on the other hand, may shake your faith. We thankfully acknowledge the good hand of God towards you in the multiplication of your number: the Lord multiply also your graces, that your faith may grow exceedingly; and the charity of every one of you all towards one another may abound. Ye are now in prosperous times; it will be your wisdom to prepare for a storm; for brethren, whenever did you know the people of God long without persecution? Yea, and that from the powers of the world. Mariners in a calm strengthen their tacklings against a storm comes. Besides ministerial teaching, we would commend unto you the use of good books; and take advice of some godly preacher, what are fit to buy: especially read the scriptures and study them: if ye also study your own hearts ye shall do well. Be careful to preserve entire unity, not only in keeping your communion together, but also in keeping your hearts together; sweetened in affection one to another without grudgings and murmurings. Let those who are rich among you strive to be large hearted to the poor among you; and so much the more because of the

Letter Continued.

present distress, and because of the great hatred of the world, which saints of our judgment endure. Be very wary against scandals; because where the gospel comes in power, the devil is wont to rage, by scandals to swallow up, if it were possible, the church of God. We shall desire you to follow after enlargement of heart, both in contributions towards the poor and other church uses, and in the maintenance of them who dispense the word unto you, that such dispensers may give themselves wholly to the work, remembering that he who soweth sparingly shall reap also sparingly; in which duty some of us have observed, on your side the water, sundry persons, yea, we fear churches have come short. We desire you to press on for an established ministry and eldership in your churches; and therefore herein be careful to buy the truth and sell it not. Take heed of the sin of earthly-mindedness, which sometimes lies hid under a large profession. Be careful of your weak members, lest wolves in sheep's clothing, through pretended sanctity and seeming mortification get in among them. Labour to keep up in one another's heart an honourable esteem of the holy word of God, in opposition to the present delusions of the times. Engage not yourselves in heartless and speculative disputes; but rather be much in practical and edifying truths; knowing that the principles which naturally conduce to salvation are but few. Be careful that upon pretence of church-meetings you neglect not closet prayer, in which be careful to mourn under straits and rejoice in enlargements. Labour after a just, blameless, and shining life, that the world by your harmless and holy lives, may be instructed. Treasure up a large assurance against an evil day to come. Take heed of hardness of heart, and declining affections towards the Lord. Let your consciences witness your blameless conversation,

Remarks.

for time past since your effectual calling; and your holy purpose for God in future.

“ We remain your affectionate brethren
in the gospel of Christ,
“ THOMAS PATIENT, HENRY JONES,
CHRIST. BLACKWOOD, P. CUDMORE,
EDMUND ROBERTS, WILLIAM HOPKINS,
RICHARD LAWEM, ARNOLD THOMAS.”
THOMAS SEWARD,

We have no account of the churches in Ireland after this period, excepting that in the year 1659. Mr. Blackwood was still with the church at Dublin, at which time he published his *Expositions and Sermons on the ten first chapters of Matthew*. It is probable that the Restoration of Charles II. the next year caused such a revolution in the Kingdom of Ireland, that he and his brethren were obliged to return home; as we find several of their names signed to the declaration of the Baptists against Venner's rebellion. We think it proper not to pass this part of our history without making the following remarks.

Dissenters were at this time very much divided in sentiment about the government of the church and of the state.

All of them disapproved of Episcopacy; but the greater part, namely the Presbyterians, who were now the established sect, were not only advocates for the necessity of a religious establishment, but, although they had themselves been persecuted by the Episcopalians, were unfriendly to the toleration of the Independents and the Baptists.

The two last mentioned sects were advocates for congregational, congregated, or gathered churches, in contradistinction to parochial churches. Their churches were distinct from, and independent of, one another, and admitted

Remarks.

of no other external interference than that of friendly advice. The pastors of a few of these, however, did not stand so far aloof from the national establishment as could have been wished. There were some of both denominations who were amongst the Triers, or licensers of preachers in the establishment; and there were more, who, although they had distinct congregations of their own, not only preached in the parish churches, but also condescended to accept of the parochial tithes. But the great majority had no more support from government than the dissenters of the present day.

With regard to civil government, the congregational churches were divided into two classes.—The one left the consideration and regulation of it to the constituted authorities, and esteemed it their duty to be subject to *the powers that were*, whether the supreme authority was in the King, the Parliament, or the Protector. Contented with enjoying liberty of conscience in religious matters, and fearing God and the king, they meddled not with those who were given to change. They were not persecuted during the Protectorate of Cromwell, it being a principle of his government that no person should be persecuted for his religious sentiments. See *An Olive Leaf: or some Peaceable Considerations, &c. for Mr. Rogers, Mr. Powel, and the rest of the good people of Christ Church, by William Erbery, January 9, 1653.* Wherein are asked the following questions: “Is it according to the order of the gospel, for ministers of Christ to meddle with civil government, seeing his kingdom is not of this world? John xviii. 36. Luke xxii. 25.—Did ever the ministers of the gospel speak against principalities and powers, though as bad as Nero? Rom. xiii. 1, 2, &c. 1 Tim i. 2. Titus iii. 1, 2. 1 Pet. ii. 13, 14.—Doth civil government concern the glory of the gospel? Is monarchy in a

Fifth-Monarchy principles explained.

king any more against the reign of Christ, than aristocracy in a parliament? Is not the state of Holland, and commonwealth of Venice, as much for Antichrist as the king of France or Spain? Isai. xix. 11, 13.*—The other class maintained that the reign of Antichrist was approaching to a close; that the time was at hand spoken of by Daniel, when *the saints should take the kingdom and possess it*; that Christ was about to reign on the earth in the midst of his people for a thousand years; and that he by his power would shortly make the wicked as ashes under the feet of the righteous. Hence Harrison, Powel, Feak, Simpson, Rogers, and others, were greatly displeased when Cromwell usurped the supreme power. So great was the discontent which they manifested, that, fearing insurrections in the city, he committed them to prison. To this they cheerfully submitted, calling it persecution for conscience sake, whilst those of the former class pitied their ill-directed zeal and were of opinion that they were buffeted for their faults.

We learn from this correspondence that the ministers that presided over these churches in England, Ireland, and Wales, and the people that composed them, were all of them opposed to those Baptists that intermeddled with the civil affairs of the country. While those who confounded the church and the world together were in constant perplexity and alarm, they seem to have enjoyed peace themselves, and to have endeavoured to promote peace amongst their brethren, who had not learned to be in subjection to the supreme power, by whatever name it was called.

Those who were called fifth-monarchy men ought to be distinguished into different classes. Venner and his associates were certainly mad enthusiasts, and thought that the

* Olive Branch, p. 3.

Explanation Continued.

kingdom of Christ was to be established by the sword. But none who know the characters of such men as Mr. Jessey and Mr. Knollys will suppose that they would go to the same lengths, although they lived at a period in which the nature of Christ's kingdom was far from being clearly understood. Without, however, attempting farther to vindicate them, we will give the sentiments of those who were called fifth-monarchy men in their own words, as contained in the declaration before mentioned.—“We find much misunderstanding among some, (they say,) and misrepresentation among most, of the fifth-monarchy, or kingdom of Christ in the nations, which the holy scriptures of the old and new testament do clearly and plentifully declare, with a positive period to the worldly heathenish laws, ordinances, and constitutions of men, as they are now executed in the nations of the world : and whereas it is also upon the hearts of many of the choice servants of God, that in this present age the Lord Jehovah is setting up the fifth kingdom, (Dan. ii. 44. ; vii. 22, 26, 27,) *which shall not be left to other people, but shall break in pieces all the other kingdoms, and remain for ever and ever ;* and that whereas at this time the fourth monarchy is partly broken in these nations, it is that Christ may be *the only Potentate, the King of Kings, and of all nations.* Mic. iv. 7.—Zech. ix. 9, 10.—Col. i. 16.—1 Tim. vi. 15.—Heb. ii. 8.—Rev. xi. 15, 17. ; xiv. ; xix. Now finding this the present truth so much opposed by the national rulers and their clergy, yea, and by some godly people and church members accounted orthodox, who cannot endure the day of the Lord's coming; we therefore are resolved, according to the presence and assistance of the Lord with us, to entertain a serious consideration and debate for the benefit of all others, touching the premises ; viz. of the laws,

Cromwell's Declaration.

subjects, extent, rise, time, place, offices and officers of the fifth-monarchy or kingdom, whereby the world must be governed according to the word of God, without the mixture, as now is, of men's laws and inventions, whether in respect of magistracy or ministry, church or civil affairs. Which debate we intend to hold in this city of London; and we desire our beloved brethren who are one with us in the present truth and sufferings, whether in church or out, in city or country, who are enlightened, to take special notice of it for this end, that they may enjoy the like freedom with us in those meetings and debates, as often as they please to come. And if the Lord give us the liberty, we do propose to proceed with the debate of it from this day onward, until we have taken a full narrative thereof, so far as it shall appear to us out of the scriptures fit to publish to the view of all men, that our principles on that point of the fifth-monarchy may be fully known."*

It is highly probable that this design was prevented by the vigilance of the government. The protector found these persons, with the republicans in the state, who were generally deists, the most difficult to manage of any. The religious commonwealth-men he endeavoured to gain by kindness. He told them that "he had no manner of inclination to assume the government, but had rather been contented with a shepherd's staff, were it not absolutely necessary to keep the nation from falling to pieces, and becoming a prey to the common enemy. That he merely stepped in between the living and the dead, as he expressed it, and this only till God should direct them on what bottom to settle, when he would surrender his dignity with a joy equal to the sorrow with which he had taken it up." With the chiefs of

* Declaration, &c. pp. 16, 17.

Republicans defeated.

this party he affected to converse upon terms of great familiarity, shutting the door, and making them sit down covered in his presence to let them see how little he valued those distances he was bound to observe for form's sake with others. He talked with them in their own language, and the conversation generally ended with a long prayer.

Notwithstanding all this familiarity, they were so opposed to the government's being in a single person, as in their opinion contrary to the kingly interest of Christ, that instead of being allured to acknowledge it, they say, "Our bowels are so moved at these things that we cannot refrain from bewailing our condition, after so vast a stream and treasure of our blood, tears, prayers, lives, and spoils of our dearest relations. O, did we ever think to see so many hopeful instruments in the army, churches, and elsewhere, to be so fully gorged with the flesh of kings, captains, and nobles; with their lands, manors, estates, parks, and palaces, so as to sit at ease and comply with antichrist, the world, worldly church, and clergy!" *

When the protector found they could not be gained by favour, he was determined to crush them; and therefore, as we have heard, several of the ministers were imprisoned, and Major General Harrison was deprived of his commission. For several years the republicans attempted a revolution in the government; and at length, failing in their design, they agreed in 1658 to the number of three hundred to attempt it by force; and having killed the protector, to proclaim King Jesus. But Secretary Thurloe, who spared no cost to gain intelligence, had a spy among them who discovered their intentions, and seized their arms and ammunition in Shoreditch with their standard exhibiting a lion couchant,

* Declaration, &c. p. 4.

Cromwell's correct Sentiments.

alluding to the lion of the tribe of Judah, with this motto, *Who will rouse him up?* The chief of the conspirators, as Venner, Grey, Hopkins, &c. were imprisoned in the gate-house till the protector's death, with their accomplices, Major General Harrison, Colonel Rich, Colonel Danvers, and others.

The protector appears to have formed more correct sentiments on the subject of religion in reference to the state than most of the ministers, whether Episcopalians, Presbyterians, Independents, or the fifth-monarchy men, who were principally, though not exclusively, Baptists. These all, in different ways confounded the church and the state together, and did not keep the civil and religious privileges of men upon a separate basis. Hence many of them who "meddled with those that were given to change," were swallowed up in the vortex of worldly politics; and, as Cromwell used to tell them, suffered not for conscience sake, but for being busy bodies in other men's matters, and for not minding their own business.

It is presumed that the protector never permitted any to be oppressed for religious principles, except in the case of John Biddle, the Socinian, and which it is generally thought he endeavoured to prevent. When Mr. Kiffin was brought before the lord-mayor at Guildhall, July 12, 1655, and charged with having violated the laws by preaching that the baptism of infants was unlawful, the lord-mayor, being occupied about other matters, deferred the execution of the penalty required by that act till the Monday following.—From the manner in which Mr. Kiffin was treated by the mayor, it is probable that he never heard any more of the prosecution; and there is no doubt but this arose more from the friendship of Cromwell, than the good will or liberality of the governing Presbyterians.

Character of the Triers.

We have said that there were several eminent Baptist ministers among the Triers who were appointed by the protector, instead of the Assembly of Divines at Westminster, for removing those from the parish churches who were ignorant and scandalous. "They had power (says Mr. Baxter,) to try all that came for institution or induction, and without their approbation none were admitted. They themselves examined all that were able to come up to London: but if they were unable or of doubtful qualifications, they referred them to some ministers in the county where they lived, and approved them if they approved them. And with all their faults, thus much must be said of these Triers, that they did a great deal of good to the church, and saved many a congregation from ignorant, ungodly, drunken teachers. That sort of ministers who either preached against a holy life, or preached as men that never were acquainted with it; all those who used the ministry only as a common trade to live by, and were never likely to convert a soul, they usually rejected; and in their stead admitted of any that were able, serious preachers, and lived a godly life, of what opinion soever they were that was tolerable."*

It was doubtless at this time that some of the Baptists accepted of livings in the national establishment, though it is presumed the far greater part of them viewed this as a direliction of principle in Dissenters, and more especially in Baptists.

Of those who thus conformed were those who accepted the appointment of Triers. Mr. Tombes, B. D. had the living of Leominster in the county of Hereford; Mr. Daniel Dyke, M. A. of Great Hadham in Hertfordshire; and Mr. Henry Jessey, of St. George's, Southwark. There

* Baxter's Life, p. 72.

Baptists Rectors of Parishes.

must have been some difficulties arising from the Independent, and still more from Baptist ministers becoming rectors of parishes; but their churches were not composed indiscriminately of their parishioners, neither were they confined to persons resident in their respective parishes.

Edwards, in his *Antapologia*, charges them with the last of these things as an inconsistency, and says, "Your congregations, as in London, where the meeting-place is, and the ministers reside, are made up of members, as of some living in London, so of some in Surrey, Middlesex, Hertfordshire, Essex, where they have *fixum domicilium*, being twenty miles asunder; and many members meeting but once in a month, where neither ministers can oversee them, nor members watch over one another, not knowing what the conversation of each other is, which are yet brought as the main grounds for your church-fellowship; which non-residence of the members from each other, and of the officers from so many of the members, whether it overthrow not, and be not point-blank against many of your principles on the church-way, I leave to yourselves to judge." *

Mr. Jessey appears to have continued as pastor of his church, notwithstanding his being rector of St. George's.—He was ordained over Mr. Lathorpe's church in 1637; and in this vineyard, it is said, he continued a faithful and laborious minister till his death. Crosby says, "He divided his labours in the ministry according to the extensiveness of his principles. Every Lord's day in the afternoon he was among his own people; in the morning he usually preached at St. George's church, Southwark, being one of the fixed ministers of that parish."

It is probable that Mr. Jessey's people either attended St. George's church in the morning, or else obtained a sup-

* p. 96.

Mr. Tombes forms a Baptist Church.

ply, as it does not appear that Mr. Jessey had any assistant. It is likely that his church of Dissenters was attended to in the same manner as before, and that as rector he did not do much besides preaching in his parish. As he was "one" of the settled ministers, perhaps there was another, either of the Presbyterian or Independant congregation, settled with him, who baptized the children, &c.; and as Mr. Jessey always admitted of mixed communion in his church, he would find no difficulty in administering the Lord's supper, as it is presumed the canons of the church were now no longer binding, and ministers would be at liberty to admit those only to the table of whose piety they were well satisfied.

Respecting Mr. Tombes, we are told by Mr. Crosby, that the people at Bewdley having invited him to become their minister, "he began here to preach and dispute publicly against infant baptism; and seeing no prospect of any reformation of the church in this point, he then gathered a separate church of those of his own persuasion, continuing at the same time minister of the parish." This is asserted by Crosby on the declaration of Fisher, in his *Baby baptism no baptism*; where, in the place referred to, he says, "I find all the people in Bewdley were church-members with Mr. Baxter at Kidderminster." Hence it is inferred, that Mr. Tombes would not administer the Lord's supper to any who had not been baptized. Mr. Baxter says that this church never increased to more than twenty persons. Crosby acknowledges "this society of Baptists was never very numerous, but consisted of those who were of good esteem for their piety and solid judgment; and that three eminent ministers were trained up in it: Mr. Richard Adams, Mr. John Eccles, and one Captain Boylston. The church continued till the restoration."

Death of Oliver Cromwell.

The Baptists who were in opposition to Cromwell must have been very uncomfortable during the remainder of his government, as he never suffered them to act up to the full extent of their principles. But those who acted peaceably, and who were denominated the sober party, were much esteemed, and universally protected.

“ At length (says Calamy) Cromwell, who had escaped the attempts of many who sought to dispatch him, could not escape the stroke of God, but died suddenly of a fever, September 3, 1658. In giving his character, he adds,

“ Never man was more highly extolled, or more basely reported of and vilified than this man, according as men's interests led their judgments. The soldiers and sectaries highly magnified him, till he began to seek the crown, and the establishment of his family; and then there were so many that would be half kings themselves, that a king seemed intolerable to them. The royalists abhorred him as a most perfidious hypocrite; and the Presbyterians thought him little better in his management of public affairs. Upon the whole, Mr. Baxter has left this as his judgment concerning him:—‘ That he began low, and rose higher in his resolutions as his condition rose; and the promises he made in his lower condition he used as the interest of his higher following condition required; and kept as much honesty and godliness in the main as his cause and interest would allow him, and there they left him. His name stands as a monument or pillar to posterity, to tell them the instability of man in strong temptations, if God leave him to himself; what pride can do to make men selfish, and corrupt the heart with ill designs; what selfishness and ill designs can do to bribe the conscience, corrupt the judgment, make men justify the greatest errors and sins, and set themselves against

Character of Cromwell.

the clearest truth or duty; what bloodshed, and great enormities of life, an erring deluded judgment may draw men to do and patronize; and that when God hath dreadful judgments to execute, an erroneous sectary, or a proud self seeker, is oftener his instrument than a humble innocent saint.'”*

While it is readily acknowledged that Mr. Baxter had many opportunities of knowing the protector's real character, and though his integrity in giving it is not in the least suspected, yet it should be considered that as a Presbyterian he was likely to be prejudiced against him. We therefore think it right to give the opinion of Dr. Owen also; who knew him probably better than even Mr. Baxter; and who gave his opinion of him after Cromwell had attained the summit of his ambition, and had practised all those arts of hypocrisy with which his memory has been loaded. The following is extracted from Dr. Owen's excellent work dedicated to the protector, entitled, *The doctrine of the saints' perseverance*, printed at Oxford in the year 1654:

“ In the midst of all the changes and mutations which the infinitely wise providence of God doth daily effect in the greater and lesser things of this world: as to the communications of his love in Jesus Christ, and the merciful gracious distributions of the unsearchable riches of his grace, and the hid treasures thereof purchased by his blood! he knows no repentance: *of both these you have had full experience.* And though your concernment with the former, hath been as eminent as that of any person whatever in these latter ages of the world, yet your interest in and acquaintance with the latter is of incomparable more importance in itself, so answerably of more value and esteem unto you. A sense of the excellency and sweetness of un-

* Baxter's Life, p. 71.

Character of Cromwell.

changable love, emptying itself in the golden oil of distinguishing spiritual mercies, is one letter of that new name which none can read but he that hath it. The series and chains of eminent providences, whereby you have been carried on, and protected in all the hazardous work of your generation, which God hath called you to is evident to all. Of your preservation by the power of God through faith, in a course of gospel obedience, upon the account of the immutability of the love, and the infallibility of the promises of God, which are yea and amen in Jesus Christ, your own soul is only possessed of the experience. That I have taken upon me to present my weak endeavour to your highness is so far forth from my persuasion of your interest in the truth contended for, (and than which you have none so excellent and worthy) that without it, no consideration whatever, either of that dignity and power whereunto of God you are called, nor of your particular regard to that society of men whereof I am an unworthy member, nor any other personal respect whatever, could have prevailed with or emboldened me thereunto.—*Sancta sanctis.*”

In summing up his character, Neal says, “Upon the whole, it is not to be wondered at that the character of this GREAT MAN has been transmitted down to posterity with some disadvantage, by the several factions of royalists, presbyterians, and republicans, because each were disappointed, and enraged, to see the supreme power wrested from them; but his management is a convincing proof of his great abilities. He was at the helm in the most stormy and tempestuous season that England ever saw; but by his consummate wisdom and valour he disconcerted the measures and designs of his enemies, and preserved both himself and the commonwealth from shipwreck. I shall only observe fur-

Resignation of Richard.

ther, with Rapin, that the confusion which prevailed in England after the death of Cromwell, clearly evinced the necessity of this usurpation, at least till the constitution could be restored."

Richard Cromwell, who succeeded his father, was not able to rule the different sects, and it appears that the religious people of the fifth-monarchy principles were very troublesome to him. Calamy says, "The fifth-monarchy men, under Sir Henry Vane, raised a clamorous party against him from amongst the city sectaries. Rogers and Feak, and such like fire-brands, blowed the coals, but the assembly at Wallingford-house did the main business. They set up a few among themselves under the name of a council of state, wherein Fleetwood was uppermost, and Lambert next him."

"But these officers (says Neal) had lost their credit; their measures were disconcerted and broken; one party was for a treaty, and another for the sword, but it was too late; their old veteran regiments were dislodged from the city, and Monk in possession. In this confusion, their General Fleetwood, who had brought them into this distress, retired, and left a body without a head, after which they became insignificant, and in a few months quite contemptible. Here ended the power of the army, and of the Independants."

As our work is designed to be rather a history of religion than of politics, we conclude this chapter by shewing what was the influence of those strict religious principles which were acted upon at this time on the morals and happiness of the people; and on the general prosperity of the nation.—We shall do this by copying the judicious reflections of Neal on *the times before and after the restoration*.

"And here was an end (says he) of those unhappy times which our historians have loaded with all the infamy and re-

Times before the Restoration.

proach that the wit of man could invent. The Puritan ministers have been represented as ignorant mechanics, canting preachers, enemies to learning, and no better than public robbers. The universities were said to be reduced to a mere *Munster*, and that, if the *Goths* and *Vandals*, and even the *Turks*, had over-run the nation, they could not have done more to introduce barbarism and disloyal ignorance; and yet in these times, and by the men that then filled the university chairs, were educated the most learned divines and eloquent preachers of the last age, as the *Stillingfleets*, *Tillotsons*, *Bulls*, *Barrows*, *Whitbys*, and others, who retained a high veneration for their learned tutors, after they were ejected and laid aside. The religious part of the common people have been stigmatized with the character of *hypocrites*; their looks, their dress and behaviour, have been painted in the most frightful colours; and yet one may venture to challenge those writers to produce any period of time since the reformation, wherein there was less open profaneness and impiety, and more of the spirit and appearance of religion. Perhaps there was a little too much rigour and preciseness in indifferent matters, which might be thought running into a contrary extreme. But the lusts of men were laid under a very great restraint; and though the legal constitution was unhappily broken to pieces, and men were governed by false politics, yet better laws were never made against vice, and those laws never better put into execution. The dress, the language, and conversation of people was sober and virtuous, and their manner of house-keeping remarkably frugal. There was hardly a single bankruptcy to be heard of in a year, and in such a case the bankrupt had a mark of infamy upon him that he could never wipe off. The vices of drunkenness, fornication, profane swearing, and every kind of

Times after the Restoration.

debauchery were banished and out of fashion. The clergy of these times were laborious to excess in preaching and praying, in catechizing youth, and visiting their parishes.—The magistrates did their duty in suppressing all kind of games, stage plays, and abuses in public-houses. There was not a play acted in any part of *England* for almost twenty years. The Lord's day was observed with unusual strictness; and there were a set of as learned and pious youths in the university as had been known. So that if such a reformation of manners had been obtained under a legal administration, they would have deserved the character of the best of times.

“But when the legal restoration was restored, there came in with it a torrent of all kinds of debauchery and wickedness. The times that followed the Restoration were the reverse of those that went before; for the laws which had been made against vice for the last twenty years being declared null, and the magistrates changed, men set no bounds to their appetites. A proclamation indeed was published against those loose and riotous cavaliers, whose loyalty consisted in drinking healths, and railing at those who would not revel with them; but in reality the king was at the head of these disorders, who was devoted to his pleasures; having given himself up to an avowed course of lewdness; his bishops and doctors said, that he usually came from his mistresses' lodgings to church, even on sacrament days.—There were two play-houses erected in the neighbourhood of the court. *Women actresses* were introduced upon the English stage, which had not been known till that time; the most lewd and obscene plays were acted; and the more obscene, the better did they please the king, who graced the acting every new play with his presence. Nothing was to be seen at court but feasting, hard drinking, revelling, and

End of Chap. vii.

amorous intrigues, which produced the most enormous vices. From the court the contagion spread like wild-fire among the common people, insomuch that men threw off every profession of virtue and piety, under colour of drinking the king's health; all kinds of *old cavalier rioting* and debauchery revived; the appearances of religion which remained with some furnished matter of ridicule to the profane mockers of real piety. Some who had been concerned in the former transactions thought they could not redeem their credit better than by laughing at all religion, and telling or making stories to expose their former party, and make them appear ridiculous.

“To appear serious, or make conscience of one's words and actions, was the way to be avoided as a schismatic, a fanatic, or a sectarian; though if there was any real religion during the course of this reign, it was chiefly among those people. They who did not applaud the new ceremonies were marked out for Presbyterians, and every Presbyterian was a rebel. The old clergy, who had been sequestered for scandal, having taken possession of their livings, were intoxicated with their new felicity, and threw off all the restraints they were under before. Every week (says Mr. Baxter) produced reports of one or other clergyman who was taken up by the watch drunk at night, and mobbed in the streets. Some were taken with lewd women; and one was reported drunk in the pulpit. Such was the general dissolution of manners which attended the tide of joy that overflowed the nation upon his majesty's restoration!”*—
Who can help exclaiming on surveying this picture, RIGHTEOUSNESS EXALTETH A NATION; BUT SIN IS THE REPROACH OF ANY PEOPLE.

* Neal, vol. iv. p. 271—274.

Restoration of Monarchy.

CHAP. VIII.**1660—1667.**

CHARLES II. was restored to the throne of his ancestors, May 29, 1660. In his majesty's declaration from Breda, before his return, it was said, "We do also declare a liberty to tender consciences, and that no man shall be disquieted or called in question for differences of opinion in matters of religion, which do not disturb the peace of the kingdom." How far his conduct accorded with these professions, the events of his reign will abundantly show. The share which the Baptists had in them we shall proceed to narrate.

In Lord Clarendon's *History of the Rebellion* there is an address which was presented by the Baptists to the king, while he was at Bruges, in the year 1657—8. This was stated to be "The humble address of the subscribers in behalf of themselves and many thousands more, his majesty's most humble and faithful subjects." In it they say, "they took up arms in the late war for liberty and reformation, but assure his majesty they were so far from entertaining any thoughts of casting off their allegiance, or extirpating the royal family, that they had not the least intent to abridge the king of his just prerogatives, but only the restraining those excesses of government which were nothing but the excrescences of a wanton power, and were rather a burden than an ornament to the royal diadem." In this address they

Baptists make proposals to the King.

declaim against the Protector, calling him that *grand imposter*, that *loathsome hypocrite*, that *detestable traitor*, the *prodigy of nature*, the *opprobrium of mankind*, a *landskip of iniquity*, a *sink of sin*, a *compendium of baseness*. Then, begging pardon for their former offences, they promise to sacrifice their lives and fortunes for his majesty's restoration, provided his majesty would be so gracious as to restore the remains of the long parliament; to ratify the treaty of the Isle of Wight; to establish liberty of conscience; to take away tithes, and provide some other maintenance for the national clergy; and to pass an act of oblivion for all who had been in arms against his father and himself, except those who should adhere to that ungodly tyrant who calls himself Lord Protector. This was signed by twelve persons. The historian adds, that the messenger who brought these propositions, asking the sum of two thousand pounds to carry on the project, his majesty dismissed him with civil expressions, telling him that he had no design to trouble any man for his opinions.

Mr. Neal thinks there is no truth in this statement of Lord Clarendon's. "If (says he) there had been such an address, it is a little strange that after the restoration it was not remembered to their advantage." If however, there is any argument in this, it applies equally against those Presbyterian ministers who waited on his majesty at Breda, and who it is well known were treated with as much neglect afterwards as the Baptists. It is remarkable that the terms which they proposed in order to assist the king were the same as were afterwards moved by the celebrated Judge Hale, and the adopting of which in all probability would have prevented many of the distressing scenes which afterwards took place. Whatever may be thought of their

Great Persecutions.

conduct in presenting this address to the king, it certainly proves that they better understood what was necessary to the securing of civil and religious liberty, than the Presbyterians. But it is not at all probable that the whole body of the Baptists were implicated in this affair. It is most likely that the petitioners were some of those who were enemies to Cromwell, and who would have preferred any government to his, and therefore wished to bring back the king, thinking, perhaps justly, that a monarchical government was preferable to a military despotism.

The restoration of the king was a signal for the enemies of the dissenters to manifest their opposition to them. Some of the sufferings which the Baptists endured were published in this year, by the pious Henry Jessey, in a work entitled, *The Lord's Loud Call to England*. He calls a part of this, "A relation of the imprisonings, plunderings, and barbarous inhumanity and cruelty, that hath lately been practised towards several ministers of the gospel and other peaceable people, in Wales, Lincolnshire, Gloucestershire, and other places; especially since the late remnant of the long parliament, by their outing of many, prepared a coffin for themselves and others."—After mentioning some circumstances that happened in Wales, he says, "The gross abuses to many good peaceable people in Lincolnshire, here follow, as they were shewed in their narrative or complaint thereof to the king, near the end of July 1660, testified under many of their hands." The narrative alluded to was by the help of a member of parliament presented to the king by the celebrated Mr. Thomas Grantham, and Mr. Joseph Wright, July 26, 1660, is as follows; entitled *Part of a Narrative and Complaint, &c.*

General Baptists petition the King.

"May it please you, &c.

"BEING commanded thereto by the Lord, we have met often together to acquaint each other what God hath done, doeth daily, and will do for our souls; and what therefore we ought to do towards him, each other, and all men.

"From which assemblings, oh king, we have been discharged by some in magistratical capacity in these parts, although therein we bless God none hath ever found us with multitude or with tumult; but being taught of God to obey him in the things by him commanded, rather than man (though in the place of magistracy) when commanded things contrary, we therefore durst not receive that discharge. Whereupon some of us have been silenced from making mention of the name of the Lord as formerly, by being entangled in bonds pretendedly imposed upon us for this good behaviour; to which in our innocency we readily yielded, being bound to the good behaviour in conscience, we feared not to be bound thereto by law.

"But such is the sad estate of this generation, that they call good evil, and evil good, with sorrow we speak it; taking their advantage against us in serving the Lord. Upon the account of the condition of these obligations, accounting us, oh king, peace-breakers, when in the sincerity of our hearts and innocency of our souls, we peaceably meet to worship our God, in his fear we affirm it.

"Since thus entangled, oh king, we have been much abused as we pass in the streets, and as we sit in our houses; being threatened to be hanged, if but heard praying to our Lord in our own families, and disturbed in our so waiting upon him, by uncivil beating at our doors and sounding of

Baptists in Lincolnshire

horns: yea, we have been stoned when going to our meetings, the windows of the place where we have met have been struck down with stones: yea, taken as evil-doers, and imprisoned, when peaceably met together to worsnip the Most High in the use of his most precious ordinances.

“ We have, oh king, spread these things before them in authority in those parts, but can have no redress from them; but the rage of our adversaries hath been augmented by hearing us abused by some of them in open court who sat on the bench of justice, under the odious terms of knavish, juggling, impudent, and fanatic fellows, &c. And as if all this were too little, they have to fill up their measure very lately indicted many of us at the sessions; and intend, as we are informed, to impose on us the penalty of twenty pounds for not coming to hear such men as they provide us; of whose principles and practices we could give a most sad and doleful, yet, oh king, a most true relation. Signed by

“ JOHN WATTS,	LUKE ROBINSON,
WILLIAM BURTON,	WILLIAM HARKER,
JOHN DAWSON,	ROBERT FLETCHER,
THOMAS HARRISON,	WILLIAM HILL,
PETER BETTS,	EDWARD WOOD,
WILLIAM ROWETH,	THOMAS CROFT,
RICHARD WILKINSON,	THOMAS MAXWORTH,
JAMES DYON,	THOMAS CLAY,
ROBERT RICHARDSON,	ROBERT GRANTHAM,
ROGER FAWN,	CHARLES COCK,
WILLIAM HUNTER,	JOHN RUTTER,
WILLIAM DAWSON,	JAMES CARDEN,
JOSEPH BRITTAINE,	RICHARD CLARK,
ROBERT MAULTBEY,	ROBERT PAGSON,

Graciously received.

THOMAS RATCLIFFE, ROBERT SHALDER,
GEORGE PAY, JOSEPH WRIGHT,
MATTHIAS BROMBY, THOMAS GRANTHAM,
JOHN GREE.

There was delivered to the king at the same time a Confession of faith, which he very graciously accepted, and returned a favourable answer. The substance of it was as follows: "That it was not his mind that any of his good subjects, who lived peaceably, should suffer any trouble on account of their opinions in point of religion, and that he had declared the same in several declarations. He promised us also, (say they,) upon declaring our grievances, that he would have particular care over us, that none should trouble us on account of our consciences, in things pertaining to religion. And while we were present before him he ordered an honourable member of parliament to go to the lord chancellor, and secretary, and get something done to that purpose. The member of parliament promised that he would do as the king had ordered him."*

This confession or declaration of faith, it is probable, was published soon after, as it said to have been "lately presented to King Charles II., and set forth by many of us who are falsely called Anabaptists, to inform all men in these days of scandal and reproach of our innocent belief and practice; for which we are not only resolved to suffer persecution to the loss of our goods, but also life itself, rather than to decline the same." Subscribed by certain elders, deacons, and brethren, met in London, on behalf of themselves and many others in several counties, of the same faith with us, March 1661.

* Lord's Loud Call, p. 15—17,

General Baptist Ministers.

"JOSEPH WRIGHT,	WILLIAM RUSSELL,
WILLIAM JEFFERY,	JOSEPH KEECH.
THOMAS MONK,	NICHOLAS NEWBERY,
JOHN HARTNOLL,	SAMUEL LOVER,
BENJAMIN MORLEY,	GEORGE WRIGHT,
FRANCIS STANLEY,	JOHN PARSONS, Jun.
GEORGE HAMMON,	THOMAS GRANTHAM,
WILLIAM SMART,	JOHN CLAYTON,
JOHN REEVE,	THOMAS SEELE,
THOMAS PARROT,	MICHAEL WHITTICAR,
JOHN WOOD,	GILES BROWNE,
FRANCIS SMITH,	JOHN WELLS,
EDWARD JONES,	STEPHEN TORIE,
HUMPHREY JONES,	THOMAS LATHWELL,
MATTHEW CAFFIN,	WILLIAM CHADWELL,
SAMUEL LOVEDAY,	WILLIAM RAPH,
JOHN PARSONS, Sen.	HENRY BROWNE
THOMAS STACEY,	WILLIAM PAINE,
EDWARD STANLEY,	RICHARD BOWIN,
JONATHAN JENNINGS,	THOMAS SMITH."
JOHN HAMMERSLY,	

"Owned and approved by more than twenty thousand."*

The persons who signed this confession appear to have been General Baptists from different parts of the Kingdom, and it is probable they had suffered in a similar manner to their brethren in Lincolnshire.

In Berkshire also there was great opposition, as may be gathered from the work of Mr. Jessey's before referred to. He says he had received a letter from Reading prison,

* Crosby, vol. ii. Appendix, p. 90.

Baptists in Reading Jail.

dated July 16, 1660, where divers peaceable persons were put, having oaths put upon them which they were not satisfied to take. Of the Lord's instructing and comforting them and their relations they state as follows:—

“Our Lord and King whom we serve hath brought us under his own pavilion, and his banner over us hath been and still is love, and hath been teaching us these lessons following.—(1.) In the loss of all outward things, having Christ, we enjoy all things, and are satisfied in the Lord. We shall take the spoiling of our goods with far more comfort than the enemy will do in the spending them; for that word in Job xx. 22, 23, is very much upon our hearts concerning him.—(2.) We hope that we have learned in whatsoever condition we are therewith to be content; and are persuaded in our hearts that this is given us in answer to many prayers breathed forth to the Lord on our behalf.—(3.) That whereas formerly we could hardly part with any thing for the Lord, we are now made willing, by him, to part with all things for his sake, and to say with good old Eli, *It is the Lord, let him do what seemeth him good.* That also in Job is set before us for our example on whom the ends of the world are come: *The Lord gave and the Lord hath taken away; and blessed be the name of the Lord.*—(4.) We have, since our confinement, tasted a greater sweetness in the promises of the Lord than formerly; and particularly these places following we have had sweet experience of. Deut. xxxiii. 25. Phil. iv. 19. 1 Pet. v. 7. And we can say by experience, That faithful is he that hath promised, for he hath also done it. It is the Lord's doing, and marvellous in our eyes! We are also brought by the power of his grace to a more watchful frame over our hearts, thoughts, and actions, by these trials, than formerly.

Particular Baptist Ministers.

“ One thing that had almost slipt our memory, the knowledge of which will we hope rejoice your hearts; that our relations, who are precious to the Lord and to us, bear this our suffering with incomparable patience, rather singing for joy than weeping for grief. Also our societies from whence we are taken are exceedingly cheerful, and a very lively spirit of faith and prayer is amongst them, and their meetings rather increase than otherwise. Sure that the Lord is near, his wondrous works declare; for the singing of birds is come, and the voice of the turtle is heard in the land.

“ And now, brethren, for as much as the mercies expected, and prayed for by us, are to be enjoyed in the way of righteousness, it greatly concerns us, and we cry mightily to the Lord, as did his servant of old. Isai. lxii. 1. Then shall we have that *new name*, expressed in the last verse of that chapter. Now the God of all peace fill you with peace and joy in believing! So pray your brethren through grace,

“ JOHN JONES,

RICHARD STEED,

ROBERT KEATE,

THOMAS JONES,

JOHN PECK,

JOHN COMBES.”

The spirit of dissipation and irreligion that prevailed, may be conceived of by the following circumstances. A letter from a scholar at Oxford to Mr. Henry Jessey, says, “ There was a play acted here by scholars, wherein one acted the *old puritan*. He who acted that part came in with a narrow band, short hair, and a broad hat: a boisterous fellow comes after him, and trips up his heels, calling him a puritan rogue: at which words the old puritan shook off the dirt of his feet against him. Two of these actors are cut off; and he that acted the part of the old puritan broke a vein, and vomited so much blood in the place that they

Ministers ejected from the Establishment.

thought he would have died in the room: he now lieth desperately sick. A woman who also joined them in the play is also dead."*

Great alterations took place at this time in the colleges, where many eminent men were displaced. "Likewise (says Mr. Jessey) several ministers in London and Westminster, and MANY HUNDREDS throughout England, and some in Ireland, have of late been put out, or are to be put out; and we cannot hear that better are put in their places. And whereas it is said that in the time of their long parliament many *centuries* of ministers were displaced, it is answered that it was generally in regard of being scandalous ministers, as that century set forth by Mr. White the chairman shows. Though it is true, some others were outed only for not taking that engagement they would have put upon them, which was indeed a grievous evil, and was testified against by the publisher hereof, and by many who are now termed fanatics, who testified also publicly against the decimatings, &c."†

Mr. Jessey's account respecting the ministers who were cast out is confirmed by Mr. Neal. "The convention parliament (he says) passed several acts with relation to the late times. One was an act for the confirming and restoring of ministers, which enacts among other things, that every sequestered minister who has not justified the late king's murder, or *declared against infant baptism*, shall be restored to his living before the 25th of December next ensuing, and the present incumbent shall peaceably quit it, and be accountable for dilapidations, and all arrears of fifths not paid."

—By this act some hundreds of nonconformist ministers were dispossessed of their livings before the act of uniformity was passed. "Here was no distinction (continues Mr.

* Lord's Loud Call, p. 2.

† Ibid. p. 28, 29.

Trial of the Regicides.

Neal) between good and bad; but if the parson had been episcopally ordained, and in possession, he must be restored, though he had been ejected on the strongest evidence of immorality or scandal." To this should have been added, *if the sequestered minister had not declared against infant baptism*; a crime which had no doubt in many instances been committed, and which was of such magnitude that it could not be forgiven, but was a disqualification, while immorality and scandal were no objection. Immoral ministers were thus brought into the church of England, and pious ministers were turned out of it.

There was also an act for the "attainder of several persons guilty of the horrid murder of his late sacred majesty King Charles I., and for the perpetual observation of the thirtieth of January."

Of the ten persons who were executed on this charge, one was Major General Harrison, who has been already mentioned as at the head of that religious party in the state who were called Fifth Monarchy-men, and were for the kingly authority of Jesus Christ, and strongly opposed to religious establishments. As this person was of considerable consequence among the Baptists during this convulsive period, it may not be improper to introduce his history in this place.

He was born in obscurity, being the son of a butcher near Nantwich in Cheshire. He was a lawyer's clerk; "but" says Lord Clarendon "Cromwell finding him of a spirit and disposition fit for his service, and much given to prayer and preaching, made him his confidant, as there were but few men with whom Cromwell more communicated, or upon whom he more depended."

His lordship gives a long account of his behaviour to the King when he received him as the commander of a troop of

Major General Harrison.

horse from Hurst Castle. The king, it appears, had received a violent suspicion of him from its being said that he intended to murder him; but he acknowledged on seeing him that his opinion of his character was totally changed.

It should seem that Harrison was very desirous of bringing the king to trial, and was very active on his trial and at his execution. He it was also who commanded the grenadiers when Oliver Cromwell dissolved the long parliament, and politely handed the speaker out of the chair when he manifested some reluctance to quit it. Cromwell found it convenient to cast the odium of this transaction upon Lambert and Harrison. Of the last he said, "Major General Harrison is an honest man, and aims at good things; yet from the impatience of his spirit, he will not wait the Lord's leisure, but hurries me on to that which he and all honest men will live to repent." For a time Harrison was his particular friend because of his great influence with the religious republicans; but when Cromwell found that his republican principles did not suit his ambitious designs, and, as Mr. Baxter says, "found himself well settled in his protectorship, he began to undermine the sectarians, of whom Mr. Harrison was the chief; and though Cromwell had often spoke for the anabaptists, he designed now to settle himself in the people's favour by suppressing them. Hereupon Mr. Harrison was by him made contemptible, who but yesterday thought himself not much below him." He was removed from his command in the army and his place in the senate, and committed a prisoner to Carisbrook Castle in the Isle of Wight.

We do not find that he had any command during the short period of Richard Cromwell's government; but after the king was restored he was brought to trial as a regicide. On his trial he manifested great intrepidity and presence of mind,

Harrison's Sentence.

and great resignation to the will of God. Ludlow gives the following account of his trial.—“ When Major General Harrison was required to answer, he not only pleaded not guilty, but justified the sentence passed upon the king, and the authority of those who had commissioned him to act as one of his judges. He plainly told them, when witnesses were produced against him, that he came not thither with an intention to deny any thing he had done, but rather to bring it to light, owning his name to the warrant for executing the king to be written by himself, charging divers of those who sat on the bench as his judges to have been formerly as active for the cause in which he had been engaged as himself or any other person; affirming that he had not acted by any other motive than the principles of conscience and justice. In proof of this, he said, it was well known that he had chosen to be separated from his family, and to suffer a long imprisonment, rather than comply with those who had abused the power they had assumed to the oppression of the people. He insisted, that having done nothing in relation to the matter in question otherwise than by the authority of parliament, he was not justly accountable, either to this or any other inferior court; which being a point of law, he desired to have counsel assigned him upon that head. But the court overruled; and by interrupting him frequently, and not permitting him to go on in his defence, they clearly manifested a resolution of gratifying the resentment of the court upon any terms. So that a hasty verdict was brought in against him; and the question being asked whether he had any thing to say why judgment should not pass, he only said, that since the court had refused to hear what was fit for him to speak in his own defence, he had no more to say. On this, *Bridgman* pronounced the sentence. That the

Harrison's Execution.

inhumanity of these men may the better appear, I must not omit that the executioner in an ugly dress with a halter in his hand, was placed near the Major General, and continued there during the whole of his trial; which action I doubt whether it was ever equalled by the most barbarous nations. But having learned to contemn such baseness, after the sentence was pronounced against him, he said aloud as he was withdrawing from the court, that he had no reason to be ashamed of the cause in which he had been engaged.*

“On Saturday, Oct. 13, 1660,” says the account, “he was drawn on a hurdle from Newgate to the place called Charing Cross. Within certain rails lately there made, a gibbet was erected, and he was hanged with his face looking towards the banqueting house at Whitehall, the place where our late soveriegn of eternal memory was sacrificed. Being half dead, he was cut down by the common executioner: his bowels were burned, his head severed from his body, and his body divided into quarters, which were returned back to Newgate on the same hurdle that carried it. His head is since set upon a pole on the top of the south-east end of Westminster hall looking towards London: the quarters of his body are in like manner exposed upon some of the city gates.”†

His behaviour at his execution was bold and resolute. He declared at the gibbet, “that he was fully persuaded that what he had done was the cause and work of God, which he was confident God would own and raise up again, how much soever it suffered at that time. He went through all the indignities and severities of his sufferings with a calmness, or rather cheerfulness, that astonished the spectators. He was turned off, and cut down alive; for after his body

* Ludlow's Memoirs, vol. iii. p. 63. † Trials of the Regicides, p. 282.

Harrison's Character.

was opened, he raised himself up, and struck the executioner on the head!"*

Bishop Burnett says, "The trials and executions of the first that suffered were attended by vast crowds of people. All men seemed pleased at the sight; but the firmness and shew of piety in the sufferers, who went out of the world with a sort of triumph in the cause for which they suffered, turned the minds of the populace, insomuch that the king was advised to proceed no further. †

It would be difficult at this period to give a perfect representation of Mr. Harrison's character. In the *Memoirs of Col. Hutchinson* lately published, Mrs. Hutchinson speaks of Major General Harrison as having "a great interest both in the army and in the churches." She however represents him as destitute of the sincerity and simplicity of the christian character. Having mentioned the opposition made to a motion of the Colonel's in the house, she adds, "Of these, Major General Harrison was one; and he, when he saw he could not prevail, but that in favour particularly to Colonel Hutchinson it was carried out by his friends; after the rising of the house, meeting the Colonel, he embraced him, and desired him not to think he did it in any personal opposition to him, but in his judgment, who thought it fit the spoil should be taken out of the enemies hands, and no composition be admitted from idolators. Whatever might be of particular advantage to him he envied not, but rejoiced in; only he so dearly loved him that he desired he would not set his heart on augmenting of outward estate, but upon the things of the approaching kingdom of God, concerning which he made a most pious and seemingly friendly harangue of at least an hour long, with all the demonstrations of zeal

* Neal, vol. iv. p. 305.

† Burnet's Life and Times, vol. i. p. 64.

Continued.

to God and love to the Colonel that can be imagined. But the Colonel having reason to fear that he knew not his own spirit herein, made him only a short reply, that he thanked him for his counsel and should endeavour to follow it as became the duty of a Christian, and should be glad to be as effectually instructed by his example as his admonition. For at that time the major general, who was but a mean man's son, of a mean education and no estate before the war, had gathered an estate of two thousand a year, besides engrossing great offices and encroaching upon his under officers, and maintained his coach and family at a height as if they had been born to principality.

“About the same time a great ambassador was to have public audience in the house. He came from the king of Spain, and was the first who addressed them owning them a republic. The day before his audience Colonel Hutchinson was seated in the house near some young men handsomely clad; among whom was Mr. Charles Rich, since Earl of Warwick, and the Colonel himself had on that day a habit which was pretty rich but grave, and no other than what he usually wore. Harrison addressing himself particularly to him, admonished them all that now the nations sent to them, they should labour to shine before them in wisdom, piety, righteousness and justice, and not in gold and silver and worldly bravery, which did not become saints; and the next day when the ambassador came, they should not set themselves out in gorgeous habits, which were unsuitable to holy professors. The Colonel, although he was not convinced of any misbecoming bravery in the suit he wore that day, which was but a sad coloured cloth trimmed with gold and silver points and buttons, yet because he would not appear offensive in the eyes of religious persons,

Harrison's Sentiments.

the next day he went in a plain black suit, and so did all the other gentlemen. But Harrison came that day in a scarlet coat and cloak, both laden with gold and silver lace, and the coat so covered with clinquant that scarcely could any one discern the ground; and in this glittering habit set himself just under the speaker's chair, which made the other gentlemen think that his godly speeches the day before were but made that he alone might appear in the eyes of strangers. But this was part of his weakness: the Lord at last lifted him up above these poor earthly elevations, which then and some time after prevailed against him.*

Mr. Baxter says, "Harrison was for Anabaptism and Antinomianism. He would not dispute with me at all but would in good discourse very fluently pour out himself in the extolling of free grace, which was savoury to those who had right principles, though he had some misunderstandings of free grace himself. He was a man of excellent natural parts for affection and oratory, but not well seen in the principles of his religion. He was of a sanguine complexion, naturally of such vivacity, hilarity, and alacrity, as another man hath when he hath drunken a cup too much; but naturally also so far from humble thoughts of himself that it was his ruin."

In the memoirs of Ludlow there is a good account of Mr. Harrison. Ludlow evidently considered him a person of great piety and eminent courage. He entered early into the parliament's cause, and was much devoted to the interests of a republican government. This led him to oppose Cromwell, for which he was sent a prisoner to Carisbrook Castle in the Isle of Wight; from whence he was some time afterwards brought by Major Strange to his own house at

* Memoirs of Col. Hutchinson, last edit. pp. 317—319.

Conference of Harrison and Ludlow.

Highgate. A conference which Lieutenant General Ludlow had with him there is so interesting that we transcribe it as tending to develope the principles of those who were of the fifth-monarchy sentiments.

“ When I was acquainted with his arrival (says Ludlow) I went to make him a visit; and having told him that I was very desirous to be informed by him of the reasons that moved him to join with Cromwell in the interruption of the civil authority; he answered that he had done it because he was persuaded they had not a heart to do any more good for the Lord and his people. Then said I, are you not now convinced of your error in entertaining such thoughts, especially since it has been seen what use has been made of the usurped power? To which he replied, Upon their heads be the guilt who have made a wrong use of it: for my own part, my heart was upright and sincere in the thing. I answered, that I conceived it not to be sufficient in matters of so great importance to mankind, to have only good intentions and designs, unless there be also probable means of attaining those ends by the methods we are entering upon; and though it should be granted that the parliament was not inclined to make so full a reformation of things amiss as might be desired, yet I could not doubt but they would have done as much good for us as the nation was fitted to receive; and therefore that extraordinary means ought not to have been used till it had been clearly evident that the ordinary had failed, especially since it could not but be manifest to every man who observed the state of our affairs, that upon the suppression of our civil authority the power would immediately devolve upon that person who had the greatest interest in the army. His second reason for joining with Cromwell was, because he pretended to own and favour a set of men

Conference Continued.

who acted upon higher principles than those of civil liberty. I replied that I thought him mistaken in that also, since it had not appeared that he ever approved of any persons or things farther than he might make them subservient to his own ambitious designs; reminding him that the generality of the people who had engaged with us having acted upon no higher principles than those of civil liberty, and that they may be governed by their own consent, it could not be just to treat them in another manner upon any pretences whatsoever. The major general then cited a passage of the prophet Daniel, where it is said that *the saints shall take the kingdom and possess it*. To which he added another to the same effect, that *the kingdom shall not be left to another people*. I answered, that the same prophet says in another place, that the kingdom shall be *given* to the people of the saints of the Most High; and that I conceived, if they should presume to *take* it before it was given, they would at the best be guilty of doing evil that good might come from it. For to deprive those of their right in the government who had contended for it equally with ourselves, were to do as we would not that others should do unto us. That such proceedings are not only unjust, but also impracticable, at least for the present; because we cannot perceive that the saints are clothed with such a spirit as those are required to be to whom the kingdom is promised; and therefore we may easily be deceived in judging who are fit for government, for many have taken upon them the form of saintship that they may be admitted to it, who yet have not acted suitably to their pretensions in the sight of God or men. In proof of which we need go no farther than to those very persons who had drawn him to assist them in their design of exalting themselves, under the specious pretence of exalting the kingdom of Christ.

Harrison's Declaration.

“ He confessed himself not able to answer the arguments I had used, yet said he was not convinced that the texts of scripture quoted by him were not to be interpreted in the sense he had taken them, and therefore desired a farther conference with me at another time, when each of us might be accompanied with some friends to assist us in the clearing of this matter. I consented to his proposal, and so we parted; but from that time forward we had not an opportunity to discourse farther upon this subject.” *

Ludlow says that when Mr. Harrison was seized, though he had notice of their intentions, he refused to withdraw himself from his house, accounting such an action to be a desertion of the cause which he had engaged. “ But I shall not (continues he) take upon me to censure the conduct of the major general, not knowing what extraordinary impulse he might be under, or what effect his piety, courage, and virtue, had upon his mind in that conjuncture. Sure I am, he was every way so qualified for the part he had in the following sufferings that even his enemies were astonished and confounded.” † While Mr. Harrison was in confinement there was published by some person not very friendly towards him a single sheet, entitled, *A Declaration of Major General Harrison, prisoner in the tower of London; with his rules and precepts to all publick churches, and private congregations: and an answer thereto: also, the Resolution of the Fifth-Monarchy Men, Anabaptists, Quakers, and others.* What is called his *declaration* is as follows. “ Since the committing of Major General Harrison to the tower of London, divers of his friends and relations have had a conference with him, touching the grounds and motives of his actions. To which he declared, that he was thoroughly con-

* Ludlow's Memoirs, vol. ii. p. 564, 565, 566. † Ibid. p. 12.

Harrison's fatal Error.

vinced of the justness of the cause he first engaged in; that he esteemed reading of the word of God an ordinance of God, both in private and in publick, but did not account reading to be preaching; that he esteemed that preaching best wherein there was most of God and least of man, when vain flourishes of wit and words were declined, and the demonstration of God's spirit and power studied; yet could he distinguish between purest plainness, and negligent rudeness: that he account perspicuity the best grace of a preacher, and that method best which was most helpful to understanding, affection, and memory; that he esteemed the Lord's-day a divine ordinance and rest on it necessary so far as conduced to holiness: that he was very conscientious in observing that day as the mart day of the soul: that he was very careful to remember it, to get house and heart in order for it, and when it came was studious to improve it: that he redeemed the morning from superfluous sleep, and watched the whole day over his thoughts and words not only to restrain them from wickedness but worldliness, and that all the parts of the day were alike holy to him, and his care was continued in it, in variety of holy duties: what he heard in publick he repeated in private, to whet it upon himself and family: which rules and precepts, he desired to be made practicable throughout all publick and private congregations, for the enlightening the dark corners of the earth, &c."*

In the pretended answer to this, though the design was certainly to degrade those who had been opposed to regal authority, it is gratifying to find that there is not any thing said against the conduct of Mr. Harrison as being at variance with his professions.

But he had unhappily imbibed, without knowing it, the erroneous popish sentiment, *that dominion is founded*

* p. 3, 4.

No Baptists among King Charles's Judges.

in grace. Forgetting the declaration of the Saviour, "My kingdom is not of this world," he had formed the ridiculous design of setting up by the sword that kingdom which should never be moved. His zeal and courage made him a convenient person to introduce those to power whose ambition led them to assume the chief authority. Had he listened to the advice given to Peter, "Put up thy sword into its sheath," he would not have known the meaning of the concluding sentence in the way he did: *All they that take the sword shall perish by the sword.*

Though Major General Harrison was a Baptist at the time of his trial and execution; yet he was not at the period of the King's death. Anthony Wood says he was not baptized till the year 1657. And from *Thurloe's State Papers* it is certain that he did not join the Baptists till after he had been displaced from his command by Cromwell in 1653. So that there is no evidence of any Baptist being among the King's Judges. This is confirmed by a letter written about the year 1670, by Captain Richard Deane to Dr. Barlow, Bishop of Lincoln, from which, as it contains considerable information concerning the Baptists in the time of Charles I. and their conduct in the state, we shall make the following extract:—

"My Lord,

"THE ground of my humbly tendering these ensuing pages to your lordship, is your declared condescension to peruse any small treatise that should be presented to you concerning the proper subject and administration of baptism. That they may in your lordship's charity, so far as their conversation suits with their doctrine, be admitted among the number of sincere christians, I intend to bring to your re-

Captain Deane's Letter to Dr. Barlow.

membrance some of their leaders, and the occasions which prepared the way for the increase of their numbers.

“About thirty-eight years since, in the heat of our late troubles, *episcopacy being laid aside*, and presbytery only as it were by way of experiment for a season attempted, but never in a national way prosecuted with effect, every man was at liberty to pursue the persuasions of his own mind, as to entering into church-fellowship in distinct congregations, and therein to join with such as he conceived came nearest to the primitive pattern in worship and discipline. About that time and a little after there were many ministers, some who had been before ordained, and others who had been admitted to parochial and other public charges. Among whom of my acquaintance were Mr. Tombes, sometime preacher at the temple; Mr. Christopher Blackwood in Kent, Mr. Benjamin Cox at Bedford, Mr. Edward Harrison, Mr. Daniel Dyke, and some others in or near Hertfordshire; Mr. Hansard Knollys, and many others who did openly profess, and several of them write and publish their opinions concerning the proper subject and manner of baptism. Some of them voluntarily left their parochial charges and benefices, as not approving the baptizing of infants, and collected distinct congregations of such as agreed with them in this doctrine of baptism; which by a succession of ordained ministers in the places of such as are dead, remain to this day.

“In the year 1649, the Baptists greatly increased in the country, and their opinions did likewise spread themselves into some of the regiments of horse and foot in the army; and that in 1650 and afterwards, some professing this opinion were called from their private employments, and preferred to commands at sea. Among others, Captain

Letter Continued.

Mildmay; to command the admiral flag ship, under the late Duke of Albemarle, when he was one of the generals at sea. Captain Pack, to command the flag ship under Sir George Ascue, rear admiral; Sir John Harman, to command the admiral flag ship under his royal highness the Duke of York.

“ But notwithstanding some of this sect had that countenance given them as I have mentioned, by such as had the principal management of affairs; yet this sect in general, as they have published in their apologies, were the least of any sort of people concerned in any vicissitudes of government that happened among us. My station within the aforementioned ten years gave me opportunity to know most persons and actions of note, in reference as well to civil as martial affairs, and particularly those of this sect. And although in and after the year 1649, their numbers did increase, insomuch that the principal officers in divers regiments of horse and foot became Anabaptists, particularly in Oliver Cromwell's own regiment of horse when he was captain general of all the parliament's forces, and in the Duke of Albemarle's own regiment of foot when he was general of all the English forces in Scotland; yet by the best information I could have, there were not at any time before the year 1649, twenty Anabaptists in any sort of command in the whole army; and until after the year 1648, there were no more than two, viz. Mr. Lawrence, and Mr. John Fiennes, one of the Lord Say's sons, who made profession of this opinion, chosen into the commons house of parliament, and both these did in that year and in the lifetime of King Charles I., as I have been credibly informed, voluntarily departed from that parliament, as not approving their proceedings against the person of the king, and sat no

Baptists opposed by Cromwell.

more in it, but lived privately until about six years afterwards. A new form of government being then formed and in appearance settled, Mr. Lawrence was again called into public employment.

“ I confess to your lordship, I never heard of any Anabaptist in the King’s army during the contest between his majesty and the parliament: and perhaps, because there were some in the parliament’s army and none in the king’s army, some persons have from thence taken occasion to affirm that the opinion of Anabaptism in the church is opposite to monarchy in the state. It is true, as before is mentioned, that this opinion was no general bar to the continuance of such as did embrace it in public employments, though I have cause to believe that one special reason of disbanding one entire regiment in the Earl of Essex’s army was because the Colonel entertained and gave countenance to Separatists and some Anabaptists. And that which occasioned Oliver Cromwell, after he usurped the government of lord protector, to discharge at once all the principal officers of his own regiments upon other pretences was for that they were all Anabaptists.” *

This letter is highly creditable to the Baptists, as it goes to prove that they disapproved of the execution of the king, and were adverse to the usurpation of Cromwell.

Another person of eminence among the Baptists was Colonel Hutchinson. He was one of the king’s judges, and governor of Nottingham during the time of the civil wars. In the field and in the senate he distinguished himself as a person of great courage, judgment, piety, and liberality. The occasion of his embracing the sentiments of the Baptists was very extraordinary, and is related with all that simpli-

* Crosby, vol. ii. Preface, p. 2—5.

Liberality of Col. Hutchinson.

city and good sense which characterize the whole of that inestimable work.

“ At Nottingham they had gotten a very able minister into the great church, but a bitter presbyterian. Him and his brethren, my Lady Fairfax caressed with so much kindness that they grew impudent to preach up their faction openly in the pulpit, and to revile the others, and at length they would not suffer any of the army chaplains to preach in the town. They then coming to the governor and complaining of their unkind usage, he invited them to come and preach in his house, which when it was known they did there was a great concourse of people came thither to them ; and the presbyterians when they heard it were maddened with rage, not only against them but against the governor, who accidentally gave them another occasion about the same time. When formerly the Presbyterian ministers forced him for quietness sake to go and break up a private meeting in the cannoniers’ chamber, there were found some notes concerning pædobaptism, which being brought into the governor’s lodgings, his wife having then more leisure to read than he, having perused and compared them with the scriptures, found not what to say against the truths they asserted concerning the misapplication of that ordinance to infants : but being then young and modest, she thought it a kind of virtue to submit to the judgment and practice of most churches rather than defend a singular opinion of her own, she not being then enlightened in that great mistake of the national churches. But in this year she happening to be with child, communicated her doubts to her husband and desired him to endeavour her satisfaction ; and while he did, he himself became as unsatisfied, or rather satisfied against it. First therefore, he diligently searched the scriptures alone, and could find in them

Becomes a Baptist.

no ground at all for this practice. Then he bought and read all the **treatises** on both sides, which at that time came thick from **the** presses, and still was cleared in the error of the **pædobaptists**. After this, his wife being brought to bed, that he might if possible give the religious party no offence, he **invited** all the ministers to dinner, and propounded his doubt **and** the ground thereof to them. None of them could defend **their** practice with any satisfactory reason, but the **tradition** of the church from the primitive times, and their main **buckler** of federal holiness, which Tombes and Denne had **excellently** overthrown. He and his wife then professing **themselves** unsatisfied in the practice, desired their opinions **what** they ought to do. Most answered, to conform to the **general** practice of other christians, how dark soever it were to themselves; but Mr. Foxcraft, one of the assembly, said that except they were convinced of the warrant of that practice from the word, they sinned in doing it; whereupon that infant was not baptized. And now the governor and his wife, notwithstanding that they forsook not their assemblies nor retracted their benevolences and civilities from them; yet they were reviled by them, called fanatics and Anabaptists, and often glanced at in their public sermons. Not only the ministers, but all their zealous sectaries conceived implacable malice against them on that account, which was carried on with a spirit of envy and persecution to the last; though he on his side might well have said to them, as his Master to the old pharisees, "Many good works have I done among you; for which of these do ye hate me?" Yet the generality even of that people had a secret conviction upon them that he had been faithful to them and deserved their love; and in spite of their own bitter zeal, they could not but have a reverent esteem for him

John Bunyan apprehended.

whom they often railed at for not thinking and speaking according to their opinions.”*

The editor of this admirable work, who is a clergyman of the established church, has remarked in a note, “Surely this shows an unbecoming propensity to speculate in religion; the story is however told with candour.” It is rather wonderful that such an observation should have been made by a gentleman who appears in general to think correctly and to write with liberality. When speaking of their patriotism he says, he is “more proud of it than if he could count among his ancestors the most illustrious of traitors!”† But they were by what he calls their unwarrantable propensity to speculate in religion, led to embrace the principles of the Baptists.

Soon after the Restoration the celebrated John Bunyan felt the weight of persecution. He had now been a preacher of the gospel about five years, and was exceedingly popular, though he still followed his business as a travelling tinker. The circumstances attending this event are related by himself in an “account of his imprisonment, &c.” It appears that as he was preaching at a village called Samsell by Harlington, in Bedfordshire, Nov. 12, 1660, he was interrupted by a constable, and obliged to desist. This was at the instance of Mr. Francis Wingate, a justice of the peace, who had issued a warrant for his apprehension. This was done it seems principally for the purpose of intimidation, as Mr. Bunyan says, that “had he been minded to play the coward, he could have escaped and kept out of their hands.” But concluding that his manifesting fear would have a bad effect on the minds of other ministers and Christians, he resolved to bear the brunt, “seeing God of his mercy would choose me (says

* Ed. 2. 271, 272.

† p. 178. Note.

Committed to Prison.

he) to go upon the forlorn hope in this country; that is, to be the first who should be opposed for the gospel." It is likely from this that he was one of the first ministers, whose courage and faithfulness were put to the test; nor could the trial have fallen on a person more eminently qualified to resist the oppressions of arbitrary power in matters of conscience.

The next morning he was taken before the justice, who asked the constable what the people did who were assembled together, and what they had with them. Mr. Bunyan understood him as intending to enquire whether they had any arms and ammunition. When the constable told him there were only a few persons who met to worship God, the justice was evidently embarrassed; but told Mr. Bunyan that what he did was against the law, and that he was resolved to break the neck of such meetings; and that if he could not find sureties, he would certainly send him to prison.

Mr. Bunyan soon procured sureties, who were told that "they were bound to keep him from preaching; and that if he did preach, their bonds would be forfeited." To which, says Mr. Bunyan, I answered, "that then I should break them; for I should not leave speaking the word of God." His mittimus was accordingly made out, and he was committed to the custody of the constable to be conveyed to Bedford jail.

In the way thither they were met by two of his brethren, who desired the constable to stay while they endeavoured through the influence of a professed friend to prevail on the magistrate for his release. After much conversation he agreed that if he would come to him again, and "say some certain words to him, he should be released." When Mr. Bunyan was told this, he replied, that "if the words were

His Indictment.

such as he could utter with a good conscience, he should; otherwise he should not." It was now proposed to him that if he would promise not to call the people together any more, he should have his liberty; which was explained to mean, that he should not preach to a body of people collected for the purpose of hearing him. To this he would not agree; and when the justice found he was at a point, and would not be persuaded, he again ordered him to be sent to prison.

After he had been in jail five or six days, his friends again attempted to get him out by obtaining bondsmen; for his mittimus expressed that he should lie there till he could obtain sureties. They accordingly applied to a Mr. Crompton, a justice at Elstow, the village where Mr. Bunyan resided. But he refused to interfere, fearing he said that there was more against him than was expressed in the mittimus; so that he returned again to prison.

About seven weeks after, he was brought to trial at the quarter sessions held at Bedford in January 1661. A bill of indictment was preferred against him to the following effect: "That John Bunyan of the town of Bedford, labourer, being a person of such and such conditions, hath since such a time devilishly and perniciously abstained from coming to church to hear divine service, and is a common upholder of several unlawful meetings and conventicles, to the great disturbance and destruction of the good subjects of this kingdom, contrary to the laws of our sovereign lord the king, &c."

After a great deal of conversation with the justices, in which he displayed great fortitude and presence of mind, Justice Keeling addressing him said, "Then you confess the indictment, do you not?" Till now, Mr. Bunyan appears

His Sentence.

to have considered this conversation as merely an examination, and did not know that he was put on his trial, knowing nothing of the indictment. He therefore replied, "This I confess, we have had many meetings together, both to pray to God and exhort one another, and we had the sweet comforting presence of the Lord amongst us for our encouragement, blessed be his name ! Therefore I confess myself guilty, and no otherwise."

On this pretended confession of his crime, without producing any witnesses to substantiate the charges against him, Justice Keeling proceeded to pass judgment upon him, which was to the following effect. "You must be had back again to prison, and there lie for three months following ; and at three months end, if you do not submit and go to church to hear divine service, and leave your preaching, you must be banished the realm : and if after such a day as shall be appointed you to be gone, you shall be found in this realm, you must stretch by the neck for it, I tell you plainly." He then ordered the jailor to take him away. To this Mr. Bunyan replied, "As to that matter, I am at a point ; for if I were out of prison to-day, I would preach the gospel again to-morrow, by the help of God."

Perhaps the reader may wish to know upon what law of the land this commitment was founded. Let it be recollected then, that on the restoration of the king all the acts which had been passed during the period of the civil wars were declared null and void ; consequently it was inferred that all the acts in existence before this time were still in force. In the reign of Elizabeth an act was passed to suppress the increase of the puritans, which enacted that "if any person above the age of sixteen years who shall

Law on which committed.

obstinately refuse to repair to some church, chapel, or usual place of common-prayer, to hear divine service, and shall forbear the same for the space of a month after without any lawful cause, or shall by preaching, writing, or express words or speeches advisedly and purposely practise and go about to persuade any person to deny, withstand, or impugn her majesty's power and authority in causes ecclesiastical, united and annexed to the civil power of this realm; or to that end and purpose shall advisedly and maliciously move any person to forbear or abstain from coming to church to hear divine service, or to receive the communion, or to be present at any unlawful assemblies, conventicles and meetings, under colour or pretence of any such exercise of religion; he shall be committed to prison until he shall conform and go to church, and make submission as hereafter is expressed."*

This obsolete law, which it is probable most persons were ignorant of, seeing it had not been acted upon since the reign of Elizabeth, was now made the pretext for renewing the persecution against dissenters at a time when no notice had been taken of their meetings by the legislative body, and while the king's declaration at Breda was still warm, namely, "We do declare a liberty to tender consciences, and that no man shall be disquieted or called in question for differences in opinion in matters of religion which do not disturb the peace of the kingdom."

About three months afterwards, Mr. Cobb, the town clerk of Bedford, was sent by the justices to admonish Bunyan, and demand his submission to the church of England. In this conference Bunyan told him that he did not conceive that the law by which he was committed to prison reached

* Burn's Eccles. Law, vol. ii. p. 147.

Political Sentiments.

his case, as it was made to prevent the assembling of those who designing to do evil at their meetings made religion their pretence to cover their wickedness: or as the act expresses, “under colour or pretence of any exercise of religion, &c.” There can be no doubt however but the law was made to prevent the meetings of the puritans in private houses, which was not admitted by the high church party to be any exercise of religion in reality, but merely in pretence.

In reply, Mr. Cobb mentioned Venner’s insurrection which we shall presently relate, and which had just now happened. “Every one will say as you do (said Cobb) under what glorious pretences they went; and yet indeed they intended no less than the ruin of the common wealth.” To this Mr. Bunyan answered, “That practice of theirs I abhor; yet it does not follow that because they did so, therefore all others will do so. I look upon it as my duty to behave myself under the king’s government both as it becomes a man and a christian; and if occasion were offered me, I would willingly manifest my loyalty to my prince both by word and deed.” When Mr. Cobb pressed his compliance by the authority of the king, Bunyan replied that in all civil matters he certainly should submit to the powers that were; but in matters of conscience, says he, “The law hath provided two ways of obeying; the one to do that which I in my conscience do believe I am bound to do actively; and where I cannot obey actively, there I am willing to lie down and suffer what they shall do to me.” This put an end to the conversation.

A few weeks afterwards, April 23, Charles II. was crowned, and a great many prisoners were released, indeed all who had been committed on account of religion since his return, a general pardon being granted. But the enemies

Mrs. Bunyan appeals to the Judges.

of Bunyan contrived to prevent his sharing in this favour by saying, that as he was a convicted person, he must sue out his pardon. This he refused to do, as it would have been a tacit acknowledgment of guilt, which he could not conscientiously admit. As however the king's proclamation allowed twelve months for any to petition for a pardon, they could not then carry the sentence of banishment into execution.

He was kept in prison notwithstanding; and when the assizes were held in August, he presented a petition to the judges three times by the hands of his wife, that they would impartially take his case into consideration. The poor woman was treated kindly, and indeed affectionately, by Judge Hale, but with great severity by Judge Twisden who was on the circuit with him. This unjust judge said, "What, do you think we can do as we list? Your husband is a breaker of the peace, and is convicted by the law." This she resolutely denied, by saying, "It was but a word of discourse which they took for a conviction;" and added, "I was a while since at London to see if I could get my husband's liberty, and then I spoke with my Lord Barkwood, one of the house of lords, to whom I delivered a petition, and who presented it to the house of lords for my husband's releasement. They told me they could not do it, but had committed it to the judges at the next assizes. This he told me; and now I am come to you to see if any thing can be done in this business, and you give neither releasement or relief." After some farther conversation, Judge Hale answered very mildly, "I tell thee, woman, seeing it is so that they have taken what thy husband spoke for a conviction, thou must either apply thyself to the king, or sue out his pardon, or get a writ of error."

Bunyan imprisoned for twelve Years.

By this it should seem that Lord Hale thought they had not legally convicted him, as he repeated his intimation by saying, “a writ of error will be cheapest.” His endeavours to serve Bunyan were however unavailing, for he was still left in prison.

Probably these circumstances induced the jailor to allow him the liberty of going abroad to preach as usual, and it is not unlikely but the magistrates were afraid of a prosecution for false imprisonment. However this was, it is certain he visited all his old friends in the country, and “exhorted them to be steadfast in the faith of Christ, and to take heed that they touched not the common-prayer book, &c., but to mind the word of God which giveth directions to christians in every point.” He also visited his christian friends in London; but his enemies hearing of it, threatened to indict the jailor, and had nearly succeeded in getting him out of his place. After this, Bunyan was so straitened that for seven years he could not look out of the door of his prison. All attempts to procure his release totally failed, and he was detained a prisoner till the year 1672, when he was discharged by means of Dr. Barlow, who received an order from the lord chancellor. This treatment of Mr. Bunyan was but a sample of the usage which was experienced by dissenters in every part of the land.

The circumstance alluded to which furnished the government with a pretext for rigorous measures against the dissenters was *Venner's insurrection*. This is related by Rapin as follows.

“The year 1661 was ushered in by an extraordinary event which gave the court a pretence for breaking through the declaration of indulgence which had been published. This was an insurrection of some fifth-monarchy men who believed themselves bound in conscience to use their utmost

Venner's Insurrection.

endeavours to advance the kingdom of Christ upon earth. On the sixth of January, while the king was attending the queen mother and the princess his sister on their return to France, about fifty of these men, under the conduct of one Thomas Venner, assembled in the evening in St. Paul's church yard, and killed a man who upon demand had answered, For God and the King. This giving an alarm to the city, some trained bands were sent against them, whom these men quickly routed and then marched through several streets, and at last retired to Cane Wood between Highgate and Hampstead; from whence a party of horse and foot sent against them by General Monk dislodged them, and took some prisoners. But this did not prevent the rest from returning to the city, where they fought furiously, till they were obliged to take sanctuary in a house. They then defended themselves like men fearless of death, or rather as secure from all danger under the protection of Jesus Christ. Here it was that Venner, being wounded, and twenty of his men killed, with as many of the assailants, was taken with the rest of his fellows. A few days after, they were all tried, condemned, and executed, without any confession of guilt, and persisting in their extravagancies to the last. Two young men only shewed some signs of repentance." *

The king took occasion from this insurrection to publish a proclamation forbidding all meetings and conventicles under pretence of religion, and commanding the oath of allegiance and supremacy to be tendered to all persons disaffected to the government; and in case of refusal, they were to be prosecuted. The consequence was that numbers of Baptists and other dissenters were imprisoned, and their meetings every where disturbed.

* History of England, vol. ii. p. 623.

Declaration of the London Baptists.

The **Baptists** soon after presented an address to the king, disavowing all knowledge of this mad affair, and expressing their disapprobation of it. This is preserved in a work published by Mr. Thomas Grantham, entitled, *Christianismus Primitivus*, and is as follows:—

“The humble apology of some commonly called Anabaptists in behalf of themselves and others of the same judgment with them; with their protestation against the late wicked and most horrid, treasonable, insurrection and rebellion acted in the city of London; together with an apology formerly presented to the king’s most excellent majesty.

“We should be stupid and senseless, if we did not deeply resent those black obloquies and reproaches cast upon those of our profession and practice in the point of baptism, by occasion of the late most horrid treason and rebellion in this city of London.—We most sadly see and feel that among many it is become enough to render any man criminal to be called an Anabaptist, or at least a ground sufficient to question his loyalty and fidelity to the king’s majesty. We may not therefore be so negligent of our duty to God in respect of our profession, or unto ourselves and families, as silently to suffer our names and profession to be buried under such causeless infamy. Neither may we be so much wanting in our duty to our king as by such sullen silence to offer his majesty just occasion of being jealous and suspicious of our loyalty and obedience; or to leave him without all possible rational security of our humble subjection and fidelity to him.

“We acknowledge that the histories of Germany relate most dreadful things of the impious opinions and practices of some reputed Anabaptists, destructive to all government and human society. Although it is to be observed what

Declaration Continued.

Cassander, a learned and moderate papist relates, in his epistle to the Duke of Gulick and Cleve, to this purpose ; that there were certain people in Germany bearing the name of Anabaptists who resisted and opposed the opinions and practices of those at Munster, and taught the contrary doctrine ; whereby in his opinion they appeared to be incited by a godly mind, and rendered themselves rather worthy of pity than of persecution and perdition. And that in Holland those who have succeeded them do in doctrine and practice adhere to the same peaceable principles, is publicly known. But the misguided zeal of some otherwise minded in the point of baptism, hath frequently though unduly imputed the like impious opinions, designs, and intentions, unto all that are called by that name ; although their souls abhor the very memory of such impious doctrines, and their bloody consequences. That such evil opinions and practices are no natural or necessary consequence of the doctrine of baptism, nor of any possible connexion with it, is easily to be discerned : yet by the like mistake we now suffer under jealousies, through the wicked treason, rebellion, and murder, of a few heady and distempered persons ; pretending to introduce a civil and temporal reign and government of Jesus Christ by their swords, and to subvert all civil government and authority. Yet we cannot imagine a reason why their bloody tenets and tragical actions should reflect on those of our persuasion, *the persons not being of our belief or practice about baptism.* But to the best of our information they were all, except one, asserters of infant baptism, and never had a communion with us in our assemblies, nor hath there been any correspondence or converse between us : but contrariwise, in their meetings they have inveighed bitterly against us as worshippers of the beast,

Declaration Continued.

because of our constantly declaring against their conceited wild interpretations of dark prophecies, and enthusiastical impulses, and professing and practising our duty of subjection to the civil magistracy.

“ And it is as notoriously known that the very same persons, or at least the leaders and the most of them, formerly advanced their pretended standard of Jesus Christ as much against us as against any others. And it is as publicly known that even in this their rebellion, such of us as were called thereunto, which were many, were ready to hazard our lives to suppress them. And if such a constant continued opposition unto the impious tenets and practices of these persons, both in our doctrine and lives, will not be esteemed a pregnant and cogent evidence of our unspotted innocence from their treason and rebellion, and satisfy every man that our souls never entered into their secrets, we can only appeal to the all-seeing God, the Judge of all the earth, to vindicate us in his righteous judgment, who we are assured will judge and do right. In whose presence we protest that we neither had the least forknowledge of the said late treasonable insurrection, nor did any of us in any kind or degree whatsoever, directly or indirectly, contrive, promote, assist, abet, or approve the same ; but do esteem it our duty to God, to his majesty, and to our neighbour, not only to be obedient, but also to use our utmost industry to prevent all such treasons, murders, and rebellions, and to use in all our assemblies constant prayers and supplications for his majesty.

“ Wherefore we humbly beseech his majesty, and desire all our fellow subjects that our actions, doctrines, and lives, may be the only glasses through which they will look into our hearts, and pass judgment upon us ; and that the tenets or opinions of others, either in this or foreign king-

Declaration Continued.

doms, may not be imputed to us, when our doctrines and lives do declare our abhorrence of them. We believing that Jesus Christ himself, his apostles and Christian religion, do consist with and obey the imperial government that then was in the world; and that we ought to obey his majesty *not only for wrath, but also for conscience sake.*

“ We desire therefore that it may be considered without prejudice, Whether our persuasion in the matter of baptism hath any connexion with these doctrines against government? Or whether these can be the probable consequences or inferences from our doctrine concerning baptism? And we pray that it may be seriously considered whether it be rational, just, or christian, to impute all the errors and wickednesses of any sect of christians in one age or country to the persons of another age and country, called by the name of the former? Especially when these errors or impieties gave not the name to the sect, as in our case, nor can be reasonably supposed to be the consequences of that opinion from whence the sect had its denomination.

“ It would not be held just to aver every protestant to believe consubstantiation, or absolute predestination and reprobation, because Luther was zealous in the one, and Calvin in the other. Why therefore should the errors and impieties of others be imputed to us, whilst we earnestly contend against them? And as to our doctrine of baptism, we hope every christian that hath searched the scriptures knoweth that there wants not so much evidence at least for our opinion and practice, as christian charity may well allow, although in some men's judgments we should be esteemed mistaken. It will easily be granted by the learned that there is no impiety in our doctrine of baptism, nor opposition to civil government, or his majesty's authority; neither can

Declaration Continued.

the injury of our neighbour be the natural consequence of it.

“Therefore we humbly hope that the omnipotent power of heaven and earth will so dispose his majesty and his people’s hearts, that we may worship God in peace and freedom according to the faith we have received, living a peaceable and quiet life in all godliness and honesty.

P. S. “That it may yet more fully appear, that our principles suggested in this apology about subjection to magistracy and government against the contrary opinions and practices are not new, much less proceeding from us upon the unsuccessfulness of this tragical enterprise, we have thought fit herewith to publish an apology of our ancient and constant principles, presented with our humble petition to the king’s most excellent majesty, some months since, in the year 1660.

“ WILLIAM KIFFIN,	JOHN GOSNOLD,
JOHN BATTY,	THOMAS BROMHALL,
THOMAS COOPER,	SAMUEL STANSON,
JOHN PEARSON,	JOHN BROWNING,
HENRY HILLS,	THOMAS LATHWEL,
EDWARD HARRISON,	EDWARD ROBERTS,
SAMUEL TULL,	JOHN MAN,
JOHN COX,	Z. WORTH,
JAMES KNIGHT,	JOHN SPILSBURY,
CHR. BLACKWOOD,	JER. ZANCHY,
HENRY DEN,	JOS. SIMPSON,
THOMAS LAMB,	JOHN RIX,
PHILIP TRAVORS,	JOHN CLAYTON,
THOMAS PENSON,	DANIEL ROYSE,
FRANCIS SMITH,	MARK CAM.”*

* Christianis. Primitivus, Book III. chap. i. p. 9.

Protest against Venner's Insurrection.

These signatures are those of the Particular Baptist ministers, and some of the principal members of their congregations. The other apology, presented a few months before on the return of the king, contains principles exactly similar, and in that they had referred to their confession of faith of the seven churches in London, printed in the several years of 1651, 1646, 1644. Also to a "declaration concerning a public dispute," printed in 1645: likewise a "declaration by the several congregational societies in and about the city of London, in a way of vindication of themselves, touching liberty, magistracy, &c.," printed in 1647. Also a "declaration of divers elders and brethren of congregational societies in and about the city of London, Nov. 10, 1651." And the "declaration of several of the people called Anabaptists in and about the city of London, Dec. 12, 1659, the answer to the first crimination."* — Crosby informs us that he found written at the end of these printed apologies, the following declaration.

"Mr. Jessey preaching soon after, declared to his congregation that *Venner* should say, he believed there was not one Baptist among them; and that if they succeeded, the Baptists should know that infant baptism was an ordinance of Jesus Christ. Mr. Gravener was present at *Venner's* meeting-house in Coleman street, and heard him say this; from whose mouth, (says the writer,) I had this account."

The Baptists and other dissenters not only protested publicly against *Venner's* insurrection, but made an appeal

* We have not seen any of these declarations. The last mentioned was doubtless that presented to the parliament by Mr. Barebone, mentioned by Lord Clarendon. *Vol. ii. p. 558.*

Baptists in Kent

to the several confessions of faith they had published, in which they had avowed their sentiments respecting magistracy and the duties they owed to civil governors. But notwithstanding there was no ground of suspicion which could attach to them, yet vast numbers of them both in the city and in the country were imprisoned, and their places of worship every where interrupted.

About this time was published an address to the king, the parliament, and the people, entitled, *Sion's groans for her distressed; or sober endeavours to prevent innocent blood, &c.* This bears date March 8, 1661, and is signed by Thomas Monck, William Jeffery, William Reynolds, Joseph Wright, Francis Stanley, Francis Smith, and George Hammon.

Two of these persons, George Hammon and William Jeffery, the former a minister at Canterbury, and the other at Seven Oaks in Kent, with many others, were prisoners in Maidstone jail. While here they published a work entitled, *The humble petition, and representation of the sufferings of several peaceable and innocent subjects, called by the name of Anabaptists, inhabitants of the county of Kent, and prisoners in the jail of Maidstone for the testimony of a good conscience.* This was as follows:—

“To his Majesty Charles II. King of England, Scotland, France, and Ireland, and the dominions thereunto belonging.

“May it please your Majesty,

“FORASMUCH as by authority derived from yourself, several of us your subjects, inhabitants in the county of Kent, are now imprisoned; it therefore much concerns thee, oh king, to hear what account we give of our distressed condition. Thou hast already seen our confession of faith,

Petition the King.

wherein our peaceable resolutions were declared. We have not violated any part thereof, that should cause that liberty promised from Breda to be withdrawn. And now for our principles that most particularly relate to magistrates and government, we have with all clearness laid them before thee; humbly beseeching they may be read patiently, and what we say weighed in the balance of the sanctuary, and then judge how worthy we are of bonds and imprisonment. And this we the more earnestly desire, because not only our own lives are in danger, but also an irresistible destruction cometh on our wives and little ones by that violence which is now exercised on us. Disdain not our plainness in speaking, seeing the great God accepts of the like. And now, oh king, that all thy proceedings, both towards us and all men, may be such as may be pleasing to the eternal God, in whose hands thy and our breath is, who ere long will judge both quick and dead according to their works, is the prayer of thy faithful subjects and servants."

After stating their sentiments respecting the king's authority, they conclude with an earnest supplication that they may have liberty to worship God; and it is signed in the name of the Baptists now prisoners in the jail of Maidstone, by

WILLIAM JEFFERY,

JOHN REEVE,

GEORGE HAMMON,

JAMES BLACKMORE.

A very similar address was presented to the king by several Baptists who were imprisoned at Dover. The magistrates here were very severe; and after harassing them a great deal, sent ten of them to prison, where they were kept for a considerable time. Amongst these it is supposed was Mr. Samuel Taverner, who had been Governor of Dover Castle, but was now a Baptist minister.

Baptists publish their sufferings,

In this year there was a small piece published by Mr. John Griffith, a general Baptist minister in London, entitled *a complaint of the oppressed against oppressors; or the unjust and arbitrary proceedings of some soldiers and justices against some sober godly persons in and near London*, in which he complains of the persecution of many godly persons to whose characters their adversaries could not impute the least spot of infamy; of their being seized, and taken out of their beds at midnight, by soldiers with drawn swords, without any warrant from a justice of the peace; of others being taken in their religious assemblies, the doors of which were open that all might hear what they said, and see what they did; and of others being assaulted by soldiers whilst they were passing along the streets about their lawful employments, and carried without a warrant before justices who acted in a manner unworthy of the office which they sustained.

When the laws themselves were cruel, and the violence of magistrates went beyond them, the sufferings of Christians must have been great. No redress was to be obtained but by an appeal to the king, of which we have many instances. Amongst others Mr. John Sturgion, a Baptist, in the year 1662 published a tract which he entitled *a plea for toleration of opinions and persuasions in matters of religion, differing from the church of England; humbly presented to the king's most excellent majesty*. The introduction is as follows.—

“ May it please your Majesty,

“ I HAVE had strong impulses upon my mind for some days, to present this paper to your majesty; and I humbly hope it will not be made to suffer much under an evil resentment upon its presentation to your hand, because it bears a testi-

and petition the King.

mony of the author's good affection to your royal self. For my witness is on high, that I did not write this paper because I love you not, because I honour you not, because I own you not in your royal capacity of magistracy and civil power. God knoweth that you have not any subject more Christianly real or cordial unto you. I humbly beg that your majesty would be pleased so far to deny yourself as to read it with patience, and judge of it as you shall see cause."

After some reasonings with his majesty respecting the prohibition of all meetings whatsoever, he thus proceeds—"And may it farther please your majesty to consider your afflicted and innocent subjects, how they have been haled from their peaceable habitations, and thrust into prisons, almost in all counties in England. Many are still detained to the undoing of themselves and families; and most of them are poor men whose livelihood, under God, depends upon the labour of their own hands. So that they lie under more than an ordinary calamity, there being so many thrust into little rooms together that they are an annoyance to each other, especially in the city of London, where the lord mayor crouds them very close together; that it hath been observed, the keepers have complained they have had too many guests; and whilst they suffer there, some of their wives and tender babes want bread at home."

After giving several reasons why the magistrates should use no restraint or force in matters of religion, he says, "Now if your majesty will but consider what it is that the *baptized people* and divers others have made such earnest suit to your majesty for: it is not for titles of honour, nor for places of profit, either in a civil or ecclesiastical capacity; but only this is their request and humble desire, That we may serve the Lord without molestation in that faith and order which

Many Baptists imprisoned.

we have learned in the holy scriptures; giving honour to our King to whom honour belongs, fear to whom fear, tribute to whom tribute belongs; in every thing as far as we have abilities, to render to God the things that are God's, and to the magistrate the things that are his."

Instead of any relief being afforded, the persecution at this time very much increased in consequence of some report of a plot which was said to endanger the government. The meetings of the dissenters were broken up throughout the city, and such as were found assembling were put into prison. Among these were Dr. John Griffith, author of the work before mentioned, entitled *The complaint of the oppressed &c.*, who was apprehended and committed to Newgate, where he lay seventeen months for no other crime than that of preaching to a congregation of protestant dissenters.

This storm was not confined to the city, but extended to different parts of the country; and in many places very great opposition was made to the Baptists, who appear to have been the sect every where spoken against. These sufferings produced a pamphlet, entitled, *Behold a cry; or a true relation of the inhuman and violent outrages of divers soldiers, constables, and others, practised upon many of the Lord's people, commonly though falsely called Anabaptists, at their several meetings in and about London.* It is thus introduced: "The sundry and divers abuses that have been offered time after time to the free-born people of England, contrary to Magna Charta and the Petition of right, and all the known laws of the land, with the declaration and proclamation of the king that now is, we cannot suppose the nation wholly ignorant of it. But it is known how inhumanly they have been used, and with what violence soldiers and others have proceeded in several places where they have in the fear of the Lord been

Baptists abused in Whitechapel.

assembled! their usual manner being to come with soldiers, which commonly were rude youths or mercenary men, with their swords drawn, to the affrighting of women and children, breaking and spoiling their goods, doing violence to their persons by pulling, haling, and beating them!

“ Now that all, both magistrates and people, may be rightly informed, the mouth of falsehood and scandal stopped, and such abuses redressed, we shall in particular give a brief hint of some of them as follows.

“ In June 1661, there came divers rude soldiers, wicked swearing and debauched persons to the meeting-house in Brick-lane near Whitechapel, and laid hands on several men to the number of more than twenty, who in a peaceable manner demanded of them their warrant for so doing. But they would not shew any authority; which one William Caswell seeing, he said to this purpose; that if they had a warrant, he would obey it; but if they had none, they should carry him, for he would not go. With that they beat him with their hangers about the head, and pulled him along by force; sometimes taking him up between three or four of them, and then letting him fall with violence into the dirt; pushing with great force his stomach and breast against the rails, insomuch that with blows and falls he is deprived of health to this day. When several of the actors of this tragedy were arrested, and a suit commenced against them according to law, they were suddenly surprised and prevented by John Robinson [the keeper of the tower] who granted a warrant to sieze the body of Thomas Hull, and the aforesaid William Caswell. The said Thomas Hull being taken in the street by virtue of the aforesaid warrant, and carried before John Robinson, he in a fury asked him how he durst arrest his soldiers; and would not take bail, but sent him to Newgate. One person

Cruelty of Robinson.

who merely accompanied him, and desired to bail him, was also committed to prison; where they both lay about ten or twelve days before they could be bailed, and were held bound from sessions to sessions for a long time after, before they could be discharged."

This will give us some idea of the little regard that was paid even to the proclamation of the King, which was issued Jan. 10, 1660, and which declared, "that if any should be so hardy as to seize the persons of any without warrant, they should be left open to the law to be proceeded against, and to receive according to their demerit." The case was now altered. At the time this proclamation was made, the king needed the support of religious people; but having got established in the kingdom, he soon discovered his infidelity and enmity to religion, and his love of arbitrary power in the state. Had there been any regard to the constitutional laws of the kingdom, such a wretch as John Robinson would not have been permitted to assume such unlimited power, and exercise such horrid cruelties. Many other circumstances of a similar nature are mentioned which fully justify these remarks, and exhibit the character of this Robinson as a person well calculated to act under such a monarch as Charles II.

At the close of this year an event happened in which Robinson was a principal agent, and which proved the severity which the king was disposed to manifest towards dissenters.

Mr. John James, the minister of a congregation of Sabbatarian Baptists, meeting in Bulstake Alley, Whitechapel, was interrupted while preaching. About three o'clock in the afternoon one Justice Chard, with Mr. Wood a Headborough came into the meeting place, and Wood in the

Mr. James apprehended.

king's name commanded him to be silent and come down, having spoken treason against the king. Mr. James taking little notice of this address proceeded in his discourse, when Wood proceeding towards the pulpit again addressed him in the same manner, ordering him to come down, saying, if he did not he would pull him down. To which Mr. James replied, that he should not leave the pulpit unless force were employed. This was accordingly done, and Mr. James was taken before a Justice of the peace charged on the evidence of one *Tipler*, a journeyman pipe-maker, with having uttered treasonable words against the king. From the character of *Tipler* the Justice refused to commit Mr. James till he brought a neighbour with him to corroborate his testimony, when he was under the necessity of ordering him into custody.

The persons who were present at the meeting were all secured, and taken before John Robinson and three other Justices sitting at the half moon tavern by seven at a time. To each of them they tendered the oath of allegiance, and those who refused were sent to Newgate, both men and women, being guarded thither by peace officers.

These Justices afterwards entered the meeting-house where many of the congregation still were, and sitting down at the table with their clerk, Major Stanley sent for Mr. John James. While they were waiting for him, the Lieutenant of the tower read a paper which he pulled from his pocket, saying, he would read to them what doctrine was preached there that day; which was a charge drawn up from the accusations of *Tipler*. Addressing the persons present, John Robinson asked them, how they could hear such doctrines as those? To which they unanimously replied, "That they never heard such words, as they shall answer it before the Lord, and they durst not lie."

Mr. James committed to Newgate.

When Mr. James was brought before them, John Robinson examined him, and amongst other questions he asked the following, viz. "Whether he had not been before him before this? And whether he had not been civilly used?" To which Mr. James replied, "yea, and he thanked him for his civility." Then the Lieutenant asked him, "If he was not counselled to take heed in future?" He answered, "yea, and he had taken it as far as he could with a good conscience." Upon which Robinson told him he should stretch for it; and if he were not hanged, he would be hanged for him. Mr. James answered, He was not careful in that matter, and that they could do no more, than they should be suffered by the Lord to do. The Lieutenant told him he was not careful; for he had a mind to be hanged as some of his holy brethren that went before him. To which Mr. James said, he desired he would not speak so lightly. On Robinson saying something about the fifth kingdom, he asked Mr. James if that was his principle? Who said that he owned the fifth kingdom which was to come. Whereupon they laughed one upon another and said, "Now we have it from his own mouth." They also charged him with having learned to sound a trumpet in order to join with Venner's party. In reply to which he said that a friend of his who lodged in his house wishing to go to sea, and being required to learn to sound the trumpet, he had requested leave of him to learn in his house, but that he had never learned himself, neither had he been concerned in the late rising as he judged it to be a rash act.

On this his mittimus was made out, and he was committed to the charge of the soldiers to take him to Newgate. His mittimus was as follows:—"To the keeper of the goal of Newgate, or his deputy; Middlesex,

Examined at the King's Bench.

“These are in the king's majesty's name to require you to receive into your custody, the body of John James, whom we send you herewith; being taken this present day at a conventicle or private meeting, in the parish of White-chapel; and there speaking in the presence of the people treasonable words against his majesty's royal person. You shall therefore keep him close prisoner until further order; and this shall be your warrant. Given under our hands, this 19th day of October 1661.

JOHN ROBINSON, Lieut. of the Tower, EDWARD CHARD,
THOMAS BIDE, THOMAS SWALLOW.

On the 14th of November Mr. James was brought before the Chief Justice Forster, Justice Mallet, Justice Twisden, and Justice Windham at the king's bench, Westminster hall. He was informed that “he stood indicted for compassing and imagining the death of the king. For endeavouring to levy war against the king. For endeavouring a change of the government. For saying that the king was a bloody tyrant, a bloody sucker, and blood thirsty man, and his nobles the same. That the king and his nobles had shed the blood of the saints at Charing Cross, and the blood of the covenanters in Scotland, &c.” To this he pleaded not guilty, neither in form nor matter; and when asked how he would be tried, he replied by the law of God; at which the lawyers made a great hiss.

He was then remanded to Newgate, and during the time betwixt this and his trial, he received on the 18th of November a letter from a person of note to advertise him there was such a jury of life and death impannelled to proceed upon him, as had not been for many years before, being all picked men, and most of them knights and gentlemen, and that if he did not except against them, or most of the chief of them, he was a dead man.” When Mr. James was brought

Mr. James condemned.

before them on November 19, the Judge exclaimed, Oh, oh, are you come? This is a specimen of the manner in which his trial was conducted. Those who are desirous may read it in the second volume of the State Trials. Suffice it to say, that Mr. James in the most solemn manner denied all the charges exhibited against him, especially his having extolled the late Protector, so far from that, said he, "I opposed him and suffered from him." He concluded his defence by saying, though he should say but little for himself he would drop one word for the Lord, viz. "That the Lord Jesus Christ was King of nations as well as King of saints; and that the government of kingdoms did of right belong to him." To confirm this sentiment he quoted Rev. xi. 15. "The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ; and he shall reign for ever and ever." Addressing the Jury, he quoted Isai. xxix. 21. "That make a man an offender for a word, and lay a snare for him that reproveth in the gate, and turn aside the just for a thing of nought."

He was then remanded back to prison, and was brought up again on the 20th to receive sentence. The next day, Wednesday, his wife by the advice of some friends endeavoured to present a petition to the king; telling him of her husband's innocency, and the character of the witnesses. Bernard Osburn, one of them, having been proved by four respectable persons to have said, "that he had sworn against Mr. James he knew not what." In the evening as the king came out of the park, and entered the palace, Mrs. James presented him with a paper endorsed on the backside, *The humble request of Elizabeth James.* To whom the king replied, holding up his finger, Oh! Mr. James he is a sweet gentleman! and on her following him to get some further answer the door was shut against her.

Mrs. James petitions the King.

The next morning she came to the same place, and on the king's entering the park, she intreated his majesty would answer her request. Who then replied, "He is a rogue, and shall be hanged!" One of the lords who was with him asked of whom he spake, to whom the king said, "Of John James that rogue; he shall be hanged: yea he shall be hanged!" On this day he was brought to the bar to receive sentence, and was asked what he had to say why sentence of death should not be passed upon him. He replied in the words of Jeremiah, Chap, xxvi. 14, 15. "As for me, behold I am in your hand: do with me as it seemeth good and meet unto you. But know ye for certain that if ye put me to death, ye shall surely bring innocent blood upon yourselves, and upon this city, and upon the inhabitants thereof." He also added, Psalm xvi. 15, "Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his saints:" and also Zech. ii. 8, "He that toucheth you toucheth the apple of mine eye." Sentence being passed Mr. James had only time to add, "Blessed be God, whom man hath condemned, God hath justified."

On the 26th of November, he was executed at Tyburn, according to his tremendous sentence to be hanged, drawn, quartered, &c. These terrors do not appear to have alarmed him, a consciousness of uprightness and integrity preserved him. When some of his friends who had desired leave to accompany him came into the prison, he exclaimed, "Here come my bride men!" embracing them with the greatest joy. But said he, "Must not the sacrifice be bound?" One answered, "Yea, it must be bound with cords." He rejoicing said, "So he had heard."

When the keeper entered, he told him he was a welcome messenger, and hearing the noise of the multitude he said to

Mr. James executed.

a friend, "There will be by-and-by as many hallelujahs as shoutings of the people without."

At the place of execution he obtained leave from the Sheriff to speak to the multitude. He began by denying a report that had been industriously circulated, that he was a Jesuit; declaring he was an Englishman, and had never been out of the land. That his parents were poor but pious people, and that his aged mother was still living. As to my principles, said he, "I do own the title of a baptized believer. I own the ordinances and appointments of Jesus Christ. I own all the principles in Heb. vi. 1, 2." And concluded by charging his friends who were present, "Not to forsake the assembling themselves together" for worship, according to their principles, whatever might be the consequence. Adding the charge of David to Solomon, 1 Chron. xxviii. 8. "Now therefore in the sight of all Israel the congregation of the Lord, and in the audience of our God, keep and seek for all the commandments of the Lord your God; that ye may possess this good land, and leave it for an inheritance for your children after you for ever." He then addressed the young and old in a very solemn, impressive, and scriptural manner, concluding with, "To-day if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts." Heb. iv. 7.

When the executioner proceeded to do his office, he said, "The Lord receive your soul." To which Mr. James replied, "I thank you." Another said, "This is a happy day." He answered, "I bless the Lord it is so." One of his friends said, "The Lord make your passage easy." He said, "I trust he will so." He was then asked if he had any thing to say to the Sheriff? He replied, "No, but only thank him for his civility." He then said aloud, lifting up his

Act of Uniformity.

hands, "Father, into thy hands I commit my spirit," and so finished his course. His quarters were taken back to Newgate, on the sledge which carried him to the gallows, and were afterwards placed on the city gates, and his head was set upon a pole opposite the meeting-house.*

Crosby remarks on this affair, "If there was any undue combination against this poor man; if it was for some reason of state, rather than for any real guilt on his part; if his judgment and conscience rather than any just crime were the cause of his suffering, his blood must be innocent blood."

"Some remarkable things are taken notice of in the narrative, published after his death, as befalling those, who had been instruments in his sufferings, or had expressed a delight in them. But (adds Crosby) I chuse to pass them over in silence." This narrative published in the next year we have not been able to procure.

In the *Heresiography* of Ephraim Pagitt, published in 1662, there is a short account of this affair. This scurrilous writer, though he supposes him guilty of the charges made against him, yet acknowledges "he brought several of his own sect to justify his defence," and says that "he thanked the sheriff for his civility and patience."†

Another design to oppress the dissenters was avowed in the year 1662, when a bill was introduced to enforce uniformity in religion, and to eject all ministers from the established church who could not declare unfeigned assent and consent to the articles of the church of England, and of every thing contained in the book of common prayer, and also that would not declare upon oath that it was not lawful on any pretence whatever to take arms against the king,

* *State Trials*, vol. ii. p. 546—549. Crosby, vol. ii. 165—172.

† p. 296, 297,

Baptist Ministers ejected.

&c. The consequence of this act was, that upwards of two thousand eminently godly, learned, and useful ministers were obliged to leave their livings, and were exposed to many hardships and difficulties. This act passed, but Bishop Burnet observes, with no very great majority, and received the royal assent May 19, and was to take place from the 24th of August following.

Amongst these pious confessors and intrepid sufferers, were some of the Baptist denomination. In Palmer's Non-conformist's Memorial we meet with the names of several Baptists, and it is not improbable but some others were of this denomination, as it is well known that Calamy has not always mentioned their sentiments on this subject.

HENRY JESSEY, M. A. ejected from St. Georges, Southwark.

WILLIAM DELL, M. A. from the living of Yeldon, in Bedfordshire.

FRANCIS BAMPFIELD, M. A. from the living of Sherborne, in Dorsetshire.

THOMAS JENNINGS, from Brimsfield, in Gloucestershire.

PAUL FREWEN, from Kempley, in the same county.

JOSHUA HEAD, place of ejection uncertain.

JOHN TOMBES, B. D. from Leominster, in Herefordshire.

DANIEL DYKE, M. A. from Hadham, in Hertfordshire.

RICHARD ADAMS, from Humberstone, in Leicestershire.

JEREMIAH MARSDEN, from Ardesly Chapel, near Wakefield, in Yorkshire.

THOMAS HARDCASTLE, from Bramham, in Yorkshire.

ROBERT BROWNE, from Whitelady Aston, in Worcestershire.

GABRIEL CAMELFORD, from Stavely Chapel, in Westmoreland.

JOHN SKINNER, from Weston, in Herefordshire.

— BAKER, from Folkestone, in Kent.

Act of Uniformity.

JOHN GOSNOLD, of the Charter-house and Pembroke Hall, Cambridge.

THOMAS QUARREL, from some place in Shropshire.

THOMAS EWINS, from St. Evens Church, Bristol.

LAWRENCE WISE, from Chatham Dock, Kent.

JOHN DONNE, from Pertenhall in Bedfordshire.

PAUL HOBSON, from the chaplainship of the College, Buckinghamshire.

JOHN GIBBS, from Newport Pagnell.

JOHN SMITH, from Wanlip, Leicestershire.

THOMAS ELLIS, from Lopham, Norfolk.

THOMAS PAXFORD, from Clapton, Gloucestershire.

ICHABOD CHAUNCEY, M. D. chaplain to Sir Edward Harley's Regiment.

It is rather wonderful that any Baptists were found in the churches at this time, when it is considered that the first act which was passed after the restoration of the king contained an exception of all who had declared against infant baptism from being restored to their livings. It is probable also that amongst those who had been expelled to make room for the old incumbents, some were of this denomination. The Act of Uniformity completed the business, and after this we do not find that any person who rejected the baptism of infants continued in the establishment. The history of the persons mentioned will be given in the different counties where they laboured, in the biographical part of our work.

In this year, and we suppose immediately on the passing this act the king gave proof of his ardent attachment to the church of England, or at least of his willingness to fall in with the prelatical party, in devising means to crush all the different sects of the Nonconformists. This was by causing to be published "*by his Majesty's authority and under the great seal of England, for the due observation of them,*"

Canons and Constitutions.

A new edition of the *Constitutions and Canons Ecclesiastical*; treated upon by the Bishop of London, President of the Convocation for the province of Canterbury, and the rest of the Bishops and Clergy of the said province. And agreed upon with the King's Majesties license in their Synod begun at London, Anno. Dom. 1603. And in the year of the reign of our sovereign Lord James, by the grace of God, King of England, France; and Ireland the first, and of Scotland the thirty-seventh. London, Printed by A. Warren, for Joshua Kirton, and are to be sold at the sign of the King's Arms, in St. Pauls Church-Yard, 1662.

We have been the more particular in giving the full title of this quarto pamphlet; because none of our historians, as far as we have been able to consult them, have taken any notice of it. The first edition of it is printed in Latin in Bishop Sparrow's collections; but there is no notice taken of the new edition in 1662, though that work was printed in 1671, and published to vindicate the church of England, and to promote uniformity and peace in the same.

From a few of these articles the reader will judge what must have been the sufferings of the Nonconformist's in every place where they were enforced. Some of these articles follow.

Art. II. *Impugners of the King's supremacy censured.*

“Whosoever shall hereafter affirm, that the King's majesty hath not the same authority in causes ecclesiastical, that the godly kings had amongst the Jews and Christian Emperors in the primitive church, or impeach in any part his regal supremacy in the said causes restored to the crown, and by the laws of this realm therein established, let him be excommunicated *ipso facto*, and not restored but only by the Archbishop, after his repentance and public revocation of those his wicked errors.”

Canons of 1603, Republished.

Art. III. *The church of England a true and Apostolical Church.*

“Whosoever shall hereafter affirm, that the church of England by law established under the King’s Majesty, is not a true and apostolical church, teaching and maintaining the doctrine of the apostles, let him be excommunicated, *ipso facto*, and not restored but only by, &c.”

Art. IV. *Impugners of the public worship of God established in the church of England censured.*

“Whosoever shall hereafter affirm, that the form of God’s worship in the church of England established by the law, and contained in the book of common prayer, and administration of sacraments, is a corrupt, superstitious, or unlawful worship of God, or containeth any thing in it that is repugnant to the scriptures, let him be excommunicated, *ipso facto*, &c.”

Art. V. *Impugners of the Articles of Religion established in the church of England censured.*

“Whosoever shall hereafter affirm, that any of the nine and thirty Articles agreed upon by the Archbishops and Bishops of both provinces, and the whole Clergy in the convocation holden at London in the year of our Lord God, 1562, for the avoiding of diversities of opinions, and for the establishment of consent touching true religion, are in any part superstitious or erroneous, or such as he may not with a good conscience subscribe unto, let him be excommunicated, *ipso facto*, &c.”

Art. VI. *Impugners of the Rites and Ceremonies established in the church of England censured.*

“Whosoever shall hereafter affirm, that the rites and ceremonies of the church of England, by law established, are wicked, antichristian, or superstitious, or such as being commanded by lawful authority, men who are zealously and

Canons and Constitutions.

godly affected, may not with any good conscience approve them, use them, or as occasion requireth subscribe unto them, let him be excommunicated, *ipso facto*, &c."

Art. VII. *Impugners of the government of the church of England by Archbishops, Bishops, &c. censured.*

"Whosoever shall hereafter affirm, that the government of the church of England under his Majesty, by Archbishops, Bishops, Deans, Archdeacons, and the rest that bear office in the same, is antichristian, or repugnant to the word of God, let him be excommunicated, *ipso facto*, &c."

Art. X. *Maintainers of Schismatics in the church of England censured.*

"Whosoever shall hereafter affirm, that such ministers, as refuse to subscribe to the form and manner of God's worship in the church of England prescribed in the communion book and their adherents, may truly take unto them the name of another church not established by law, and dare presume to publish that this their pretended church, hath so long time groaned under the burden of certain grievances imposed upon it, and upon the members thereof before mentioned, by the church of England, and the orders and constitutions therein by law established, let them be excommunicated and not restored, &c."

Art. XI. *Maintainers of conventicles censured.*

"Whosoever shall hereafter affirm or maintain, that there are within this realm, other meetings, assemblies, or congregations of the king's born subjects, than such as are by the laws of this land held and allowed, which may rightly challenge to themselves the name of true and lawful churches, let him be excommunicated, &c."

Art. XII. *Maintainers of Constitutions made in conventicles censured.*

Royal Declaration.

“Whosoever shall hereafter affirm, that it is lawful for any sort of ministers and lay persons, or either of them to join together, and make Rules, Orders, or Constitutions, in causes ecclesiastical, without the king’s authority, and shall submit themselves to be ruled and governed by them, let them be excommunicated, *ipso facto*, and not be restored until they repent, and publicly revoke those their wicked and Anabaptistical errors.”

These Canons are in number one hundred and forty one, and are thus concluded. “WEE of our PRINCELY INCLINATION and Royall care, for the maintenance of the present Estate and Government of the Church of England by the laws of this our Realme, now settled and established, having dilligently, with great contentment and comfort, read and considered of all these their said Canons, Orders, Ordinances, and Constitutions agreed upon, as is before expressed; and finding the same such as We are persuaded will be very profitable not only to Our Clergy, but to the whole Church of this our Kingdom, and to all the true members of it, (if they be well observed.) Have therefore for Us, our Heirs and lawfull Successors, of our especial Grace, certaine knowledge, and meer motion given, and by these presents do give our Royall assent, according to the forme of the said Statute or Act of Parliament aforesaid, to all and every of the said Canons, Orders, Ordinances, and Constitutions, and to all, and every thing in them contained, as they are before written.

“And furthermore, We do not opely by our said Prerogative Royall, and Supream authority in causes ecclesiastical, ratify, confirm, and establish, by these our Letters Pattents, the said Canons, Orders, Ordinances, and Constitutions, and all, and every thing in them contained, as is aforesaid; but do

Royal Declaration.

likewise propound, publish, and straightly enjoin, and command by our said Authority, and by these our Letters Pattents, the same to be dilligently observed, executed, and equally kept by all our loving Subjects of this our Kingdom both within the province of *Canterbury*, and *York*, in all points wherein they do, or may concerne every or any of them according to this Our will, and pleasure hereby signified and expressed: and that likewise for the better observation of them, every Minister by what name or title soever he be called, shall in the Parish Church or Chapell, where he hath charge, read all the said Canons, Orders, and Constitutions once every year upon some Sundayes; or Holy Dayes in the afternoon before divine Service, dividing the same in such sort, as that the one half may be read one day, and the other another day, the book of the said Canons to be provided at the charge of the Parish betwixt this and the feast of the Nativity of our Lord God next ensuing: Straightly charging and commanding all Arch-Bishops, Bishops, and all other that exercise any Ecclesiasticall Jurisdiction within this realm, every man in his place to see, and procure (so much as in them lieth) all and every of the same Canons, Orders, Ordinances, and Constitutions to be in all points duely observed, not sparing to execute the Penalties in them severally mentioned, upon any that shall willingly or wilfully breake, or neglects to observe the same, as they tender the honour of God, the peace of the Church, Tranquility of the Kingdome, and their duties, and services to us, their KING, and Sovereign.

In Witnesse, &c."

When it is recollected that the Canons which relate to the discipline and doctrines and Hierarchy of the church of England, had been by the government about twenty years before declared null and void with the greatest unanimity;

Excommunication.

not a negative vote being found in both houses, and which occasioned such joy that there were bonfires, and ringing of bells all over the city; and also that the principles now censured had been universally propagated and acted upon during the whole of that time; some conception may be formed of the spirit by which this measure was promoted, and of the terrible consequences which would follow from it, either in making persons vile hypocrites through fear, or impoverished dependants through the fortitude which would lead them now to say, "Whether it be right in the sight of God to obey you rather than God, judge ye."

They that are acquainted with the terrible consequences of an *excommunication* in the spiritual courts, must be sensible of the hardships put upon the Nonconformists by these Canons. Suspensions and deprivations from their livings, were not now thought sufficient for the sin of Nonconformity; but the dissenters both clergy and laity, must be turned out of the congregation of the faithful; they must be made incapable of suing for their lawful debts; they must be imprisoned for life by a *Capeas*, unless they make satisfaction to the church; and when they die they must not have christian burial. Lamentable was the condition of the dissenters at this time, and dreadful were the sufferings hundreds of them endured; by the operations of these Canons which his Majesty had enjoined on all his subjects; after he had *read them, and diligently considered them, with great contentment and comfort*. Some of these effects as experienced by the Baptists we shall proceed to narrate.

At Aylesbury in Buckinghamshire the persecution of dissenters was so violent in 1664, that two large houses were turned into prisons to make room for them, as the county gaol would not hold the numbers that were committed.

Baptists at Aylesbury.

Their goods were confiscated, and their persecutors intended if possible to get the penalty of banishment or death inflicted upon them according to the 35th of Elizabeth.

Of these there were twelve persons, ten men and two women, all Baptists, who had been taken at their meeting in or near Aylesbury; and having been legally convicted of the same three months before, they were now brought before a bench of justices at their *quarter sessions*. They were then required either to conform to the church of England, and take the oaths of allegiance and supremacy, or to abjure the realm as this law directed; and were assured that if they refused to do either of these, sentence of death should be passed upon them.

However, that there may be some show of clemency, they gave them till the afternoon to consider of it. Mr. Farrow one of the justices of that county who lived at Aylesbury, was the principal agent in this prosecution; and the better to carry on his malicious designs he was this day made their chairman. Several of the Justices left the bench being ashamed of these rigorous proceedings or afraid of the consequences of such severity. But *Farrow* and three or four more continued, and were resolved to push on the matter.

When the prisoners were again brought forth, they all declared, that *they could neither conform to the church of England, nor abjure their native country nor relations*, and therefore must throw themselves on the mercy of the court. Upon this they were by virtue of the aforecited law, declared guilty of felony. Sentence of death was accordingly passed upon them, and they were remanded back to gaol till their execution. The men were Stephen Dagnal, minister; Ellit, a teacher; William Whitechurch, a glover, and a deacon of the congregation; Thomas Hill, a linen draper; William Welch,

Sentence of Death Passed.

a tallow chandler; Thomas Monk, a farmer; Brundon, a shoe maker; and three more, whose names, Crosby says, he could not obtain. The women were, Mary Jackman, a widow, who had six children; and Ann Turner, spinster.

The sentence was no sooner passed than the officers were sent to their houses to seize on whatever of their effects could be found, which order was executed with great severity. The rest of the dissenters who lived in the town were much alarmed at these proceedings, expecting it would next come to their turn to be treated in the same manner. Brundon, one of the condemned persons, was prevailed upon by the tears and earnest entreaties of his wife, to make a recantation and take the oaths; but he presently found such horror and distress in his mind for what he had done as exceeded all his fears of death, or distress for his family. He therefore voluntarily returned to the prison again, and declared with the greatest signs of grief and trouble his repentance for what he had done; and there continued with his companions, resolving to die with them in defence of that cause he had so shamefully renounced.

Thomas Monk, son of one of the condemned persons, upon the passing of the sentence immediately rode to London, where he applied to Mr. William Kiffin, who had considerable influence at court, particularly with Chancellor Hyde. When he had related the whole matter to him, they went with great expedition to Hyde, and entreated him to lay the case before the king, which he readily did. The king seemed much surprised that any of his subjects should be put to death for their religion only, and enquired whether there was any law in force that would justify such proceedings. Being satisfied on this point, he promised his pardon, and gave orders to the lord chancellor accordingly. But considering

The King grants a pardon.

that the form of passing a pardon would take some time, and that those who had so hastily passed sentence of death might be as hasty in executing it, they renewed their suit to his majesty that an immediate reprieve might be granted, which his majesty as graciously complied with; and it was given to Thomas Monk, who made all possible haste with it to Aylesbury.

When he related his success at court, and produced his majesty's reprieve, it was not more joyful to his friends than surprising to their persecutors, and put a stop in some measure to their violence. The condemned persons however were kept close prisoners till the next assizes, when the judge brought down his majesty's pardon, and they were all set at liberty.

The influence which Mr. Kiffin had at court in all probability arose from his great property: it is certain his principles as a Baptist did not recommend him. It is said that the king once condescended, when in want of money, to ask him a favour; this was, that he would lend him forty thousand pounds. Mr. Kiffin apologized for not having it in his power to lend his majesty so great a sum, but told the messenger that if it would be of any service, he would present him with ten thousand pounds, which sum was accepted; and Mr. Kiffin used afterwards to say that he had saved thirty thousand pounds by his liberality.

The attempt to crush the dissenters was pursued with rigour, and every means adopted to prevent the increase of their principles. For this purpose dragoons were sent into the different counties to suppress whatever meetings of dissenters they could find. In Buckinghamshire, the excellent Benjamin Keach felt the weight of their rude fury. Discovering a meeting where he was preaching, they came with great rage

Sufferings of Mr. Keach.

and violence upon the assembly, and swore they would kill the preacher. Accordingly he was seized, and four of the troopers declared their determination to trample him to death with their horses. Having bound him, they laid him on the ground for this purpose, and had actually prepared themselves to accomplish this horrid design. But the officer discovering their intention, rode up to them just as they were going to spur their horses to ride over him, and interposing his authority prevented them. He was then taken up and tied behind one of the troopers across his horse and carried to gaol, where he lay some time and suffered great hardships. Being a bold and zealous preacher, he was frequently seized and committed to prison, where he was sometimes bound, but often released upon bail.

In the year 1664 he wrote a little book which many of his friends wished him to publish for the use of their children. This request he complied with, and entitled it, *The Child's Instructor, or a New and Easy Primmer*. He did not put his name to it, and procured a friend to write a recommendatory preface; from which it should seem that he apprehended it would expose him to some difficulties, as there were several things in it contrary to the doctrines and ceremonies of the church of England.

This book was no sooner printed, and some few of them sent down to him, than one Mr. Strafford, a justice of the peace for that county, was informed of it. He immediately took a constable with him, and went to the house of Mr. Keach, where they seized all the books they could find, and bound him to appear at the assizes to answer for his crime, in a recognizance of a hundred pounds himself, and two sureties of fifty pounds each.

Mr. Keach's Trial.

The assizes commenced at Aylesbury, October the 8th, 1664, and Lord Chief Justice Hyde, just now mentioned, afterwards Lord Clarendon, presided as judge. The account of this trial will give a pretty correct view of his lordship's character, and of the shameful prostitution of justice resorted to in order to deprive the subjects of their liberty, and to punish the nonconformists in those days of persecution.

Mr. Keach was called to the bar the first day in the afternoon. After some reflections upon his person and profession, the judge, holding one of the primmers in his hand, said to him, Did not you write this book? Mr. Keach replied, that he did write the greatest part of it. The judge then said with great indignation, What have you to do to take other men's trades out of their hands? I believe you can preach, as well as write books. Thus it is, to let you and such as you are to have the scriptures to wrest to your own destruction. In your book you have made a new creed. I have seen three creeds before, but never saw a fourth till you made one!

To this Mr. Keach answered, I have not made a creed, but a confession of my faith. What is a creed then? said the judge. Mr. Keach replied, your Lordship said that you had never seen but three creeds; but thousands of Christians have made a confession of their faith.

The judge speaking many things concerning baptism and the ministers of the gospel, Mr. Keach began to answer, but was prevented by the judge, who said, you shall not preach here, nor give the reasons of your damnable doctrine to seduce and infect the king's subjects: these are not things for such as you to meddle with, nor to write books of divinity. I will try you for it before I sleep.—He accordingly gave directions to the clerk to draw up the indictment; but though he

His Indictment.

spent much of his time in assisting the clerk, who was very diligent in preparing the bill, they could not get ready for trial till the next day.

While the indictment was drawing up, the witnesses were sworn, and bid to stand by the clerk till it was finished, and then go with it to the grand jury. During this interval the judge endeavoured to incense the jury against the prisoner, representing him as a base and dangerous fellow. I shall send you presently, said he, a bill against one that has taken upon him to write a new primmer for the instruction of your children; and if this be suffered, children by learning it will become such as he is, and therefore I hope you will do your duty.

The court being set the next day, the grand jury found a true bill. Mr. Keach being brought to the bar, the clerk said, Benjamin Keach, hear your charge. Thou art here indicted by the name of Benjamin Keach, of Winslow, in the county of Bucks, for that thou being a seditious, schismatic person, evilly and maliciously disposed and disaffected to his majesty's government and the government of the church of England, didst maliciously and wickedly on the fifth of May in the sixteenth year of the reign of our sovereign lord the king, write, print, and publish, or cause to be written, printed, and published, one seditious and venomous book entitled, *The Child's Instructor, or a New and Easy Primmer*; wherein are contained by way of question and answer these damnable positions, contrary to the book of common prayer and the liturgy of the church of England; that is to say, in one place you have thus written:—

Q. Who are the right subjects of baptism?

A. Believers, or godly men and women, who make profession of their faith and repentance.

His Indictment.

In another place you have maliciously and wickedly written these words :—Q. How shall it go with the saints? *A.* Very well : it is the day they have longed for. Then shall they hear the sentence, Come ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you ; and so shall they reign with Christ on the earth a thousand years, even on Mount Sion in the New Jerusalem ; for there will Christ's throne be, on which they must sit down with him.

Then follows this question with the answer in plain english words :—Q. When shall the rest of the wicked and the fallen angels, which be the devils, be judged? *A.* When the thousand years shall be expired : then shall all the rest of the dead be raised, and then shall be the last and general judgment : then shall all the rest of the dead and the devils be judged by Christ and his glorified saints ; and they being arraigned and judged, the wicked shall be condemned, and cast with the angels into the lake of fire, there to be burned for ever and ever.

In another place you have wickedly and maliciously written these plain english words :—Q. Why may not infants be received into the church now as they were under the law? *A.* Because the fleshly seed is cast out. Though God under that dispensation did receive infants in a lineal way by generation ; yet he that hath the key of David, that openeth and no man shutteth, and shutteth and no man openeth, hath shut up that way into the church, and opened the door of regeneration, receiving in none now but true believers.

Q. What is the case of infants? *A.* Infants that die are members of the kingdom of glory, though they be not members of the visible church.

Q. Do they then that bring in infants in a lineal way by generation err from the way of truth? *A.* Yea, they do ;

His Indictment.

for they make not God's holy word their rule, but do presume to open a door that Christ hath shut, and none ought to open.

Also in another place thou hast wickedly and maliciously composed a short confession of the Christian faith, in which thou hast affirmed this concerning the second person in the blessed Trinity, in these plain english words :—I also believe that he rose again from the dead, and ascended into heaven above, and there now sitteth at the right hand of God the Father ; and from thence he shall come again at the appointed time to reign personally on the earth, and to be judge of the quick and the dead.

In another place thou hast wickedly and maliciously affirmed these things concerning true gospel ministers, in these plain english words following :—Christ hath not chosen the wise and prudent men after the flesh, not great doctors and rabbies ; not many mighty and noble, saith St. Paul, are called ; but rather the poor and despised, even tradesmen and such like, as were Matthew, Peter, Andrew, Paul, and others. Christ's true ministers have not their learning and teaching from men, or from universities, or from human schools ; for human learning, arts and sciences, are not essential in order to the making of a true minister, but only the gift of God which cannot be bought with silver and gold. And also as they have freely received the gift of God, so they do freely administer : they do not preach for hire, for gain or filthy lucre. They are not like false teachers who look for gain from their quarter ; who eat the fat and clothe themselves with the wool, and kill them that are fed. Those that put not into their mouths they prepare war against. Also they are not lords over God's heritage : they rule them not by force nor cruelty, neither have they power to force and compel men to believe

Mr. Keach pleads not Guilty.

and obey their doctrine, but only persuade and entreat. This is the way of the gospel as Christ taught them.—Many other things hast thou seditiously, wickedly, and maliciously written in the said book, to the great displeasure of Almighty God, the scandal of the liturgy of the church of England, the disaffection of the king's people to his majesty's government, the dangers of the peace of this kingdom, to the evil example of others, and contrary to the statute in that case made and provided.

The indictment being read, the clerk said, how say you, Benjamin Keach? Are you guilty or not guilty? To this Mr. Keach replied, the indictment is very long: I cannot remember half of it, nor have I been accustomed to plead to indictments. I desire to have a copy of it, and liberty to confer with council about it, in order to put in my exceptions; and then I shall plead to it.

The judge addressing Mr. Keach, said, It is your intention to delay your trial till the next assizes. No, my lord, said Mr. Keach: I have no design by this to delay my trial. The judge answered, I will not deny you what is your right, but you must first plead to the indictment, and afterwards you shall have a copy of it. Mr. Keach replied, I desire I may have a copy of it before I plead, in order to put in my exceptions against it.

Judge. You shall not have it before you plead, guilty or not guilty.

Keach. It is what has been granted to others.

Judge. You shall not have a copy of it first; and if you refuse to plead guilty or not guilty, I shall take it pro confesso, and give judgment against you accordingly.

When Mr. Keach saw that he was thus overruled by the judge, and that he was denied his rights as an Englishman, he pleaded not guilty.

Mr. Keach's Trial.

Judge. Now you shall have a copy of your indictment, and I will give you an hour's time to consider of it.

Keach. If I may have no longer time allowed me, I do not desire it.

Judge. I have something else to do than to wait upon you. You are not a person fit to go abroad till the next assizes, and you would think it hard if I should commit you to gaol till then. But because you shall not say but that you were offered fair, if you will find sufficient sureties for your appearance at the next assizes, and for your good behaviour till then you shall not be tried till then.

Mr. Keach knowing that his appearing at any dissenting meeting would be deemed a breach of his good behaviour, durst not accept of this proposal; and therefore said, I am willing to be tried now.

Judge. Go on then, in God's name.

The jury were then called by their names, and sworn to well and truly try the traverse between the king and the prisoner at the bar.

The clerk read the indictment, and told them that he had pleaded not guilty; that their charge was to inquire whether he was guilty or not; and so the witnesses were called, whose names were Neal and Whitehall.

Neal swore that Justice Strafford sending for him, he waited on his worship, and was commanded to fetch his staff of authority and come again. That then they went to one Moody's stall and asked for some primmers which he had; but he answered that he had none. From thence they went to Benjamin Keach's house, where first they saw his wife, he himself being in an inner room. They asked her whether there were not some primmers in the house. She said there were, and about thirty were brought and delivered to them.

His Crimes.

Justice Strafford also deposed, that going to the house of the prisoner, he found and seized the said primmers, and that the prisoner at the bar confessed before him that he wrote and composed the said book; that then a copy of the prisoner's examination before the said deponent, signed with his own hand, was produced and read: wherein was contained that the prisoner being asked whether he was the author or writer of the said book, answered, yes he was; and further declared that he delivered part of the copy to one Oviat, a printer, since dead, and that the rest of the copy he sent up by another hand, but that he knew not who printed it; that about forty of them were sent down to him, of which he had disposed of about twelve, and that the price was five pence each.

The judge then called for a common prayer book, and ordered one of the primmers to be given to the jury; commanding the clerk to read those sentences in the indictment that were taken out of the said book, that the jury might turn to them to see that the said positions were contained therein.

The first position, which affirms that "believers only are the right subjects of baptism," being read; this, said the judge, is contrary to the book of common prayer, for that appoints infants to be baptized, as well as men and women. He then read several places wherein the baptizing of such is enjoined and vindicated.

The next position is that which affirms that "the saints shall reign with Christ a thousand years." This, said the judge, is contrary to the creed in the book of common prayer, and is an old heresy which was cast out of the church a thousand years ago, and was likewise condemned by the Council of Constance about five hundred years since, till now this rascal hath revived it.

His Crimes.

On reading that position in the indictment which denies "that infants are to be received into the church now as they were under the law," the judge said, this also is contrary to the book of common prayer; which appoints infants to be received into the church, and directs the priest to say when he hath sprinkled the child, we receive this child into the congregation of Christ's flock.

The next position being read, wherein it is affirmed that "infants who die are members of the kingdom of glory, though not of the visible church," the judge said, this he speaks of infants in general; so that the child of a Turk is made equal to the child of a Christian. But our church hath determined otherwise; viz. that if an infant die after baptism, and before it hath actually sinned, it is saved, because original sin is washed away in baptism.

After this, the position in the indictment which was taken out of the confession of faith was read. This, said the judge, is contrary to our creed; for whereas this saith of Christ that "he ascended into heaven above, and there now sitteth at the right hand of God the Father, and from thence he shall come again at the appointed time of the Father to reign personally on the earth, and to be the judge both of quick and dead;" our creed saith only, from thence shall he come to judge both the quick and the dead. And as to that concerning gospel ministers, this also is contrary to the book of common prayer. Whereas the position in the indictment saith, that "Christ hath not chosen great rabbies and doctors, but rather the poor and despised, and tradesmen;" the book of common prayer does admit of such, namely, doctors and rabbies. He then read some passages concerning the qualifications of ministers, and their manner of consecration in proof of it. He afterwards said, Because Christ when

Prevented from speaking.

he was on earth made choice of tradesmen to be his disciples, this *fellow* would have ministers to be such now; *tailors, pedlars, and tinkers*; such *fellows* as he is. But it is otherwise now, as appears from the manner in which the church has appointed them to be chosen, ordained, and consecrated.

The judge having ended, the prisoner thought now he might have liberty to speak for himself, and accordingly began.

Mr. Keach. As to the doctrines——

Judge. You shall not speak any thing here, except to the matter of *fact*; that is to say, whether you wrote this book or not.

Keach. I desire liberty to speak to the particulars of my indictment, and answer those things that have——

Judge. You shall not be suffered to give the reasons of your doctrine here, to seduce the king's subjects.

Keach. Is my religion so bad that I may not be allowed to speak?

Judge. I know your religion: you are a fifth-monarchy man, and you can preach, as well as write book and you would preach here if I would let you; but I shall take such order as you shall do no more mischief.

This threatening made Mr. Keach and some of his friends, who were unacquainted with the law of the case, fear that he intended to have him hanged.

Keach. I did not write all the book, for there is an epistle written to it by another hand; neither can it be proved that I wrote all that is put in the indictment.

Judge. It is all one, whether you wrote it yourself, or dictated to another that wrote it; but it appears by your examination under your own hand that you wrote it all.

Difficulties of the Jury.

Keach. Because I wrote the greater part of it, I was content to let it go with the word *all* in my examination before Justice Strafford; but I cannot in conscience say that I wrote it all, nor is it proved that I published it.

Judge. Yes, for Moody had six books of you.

Keach. I did neither sell them, nor deliver them to him.

Judge. He had them at your house, and it is not likely that he should take them without your consent.

Keach. I do not say that he had them without my consent.

Judge. It is all one, then.

Some few more words passed; but Mr. Keach not being permitted to answer all the particulars charged upon him, was content not to require more proof of his being the author of the book.

The judge then summed up the evidence, and gave his charge to the jury; wherein he endeavoured to incense them against the prisoner, as he had done before in his charge to the grand jury.

The jury having received their charge, withdrew, and staid for some hours. At length one of the bailiffs who attended them came and told the judge that the jury could not agree.

But, said the judge, they must agree. The bailiff replied, that they desired to know whether one of them might not speak to his worship about something whereof they were in doubt. Yes *privately*, said the judge; and ordered that one should come to him on the bench. When the officer had fetched one of them, the juryman was set upon the clerk's table, and the judge and he whispered a great while; and it was observed that the judge having his hands upon his shoulders would frequently shake him as he spake to him.

Upon the person returning, the whole jury quickly came in; and being according to custom called over by their names, the clerk proceeded.

Guilty in part.

Clerk. How say you? Is Benjamin Keach guilty of the matter contained in the indictment against him, or not guilty?

Foreman. Guilty in part.

Clerk. Of what part?

Foreman. In the indictment he is charged with these words : When the thousand years shall be expired, then shall all the rest of the *devils* be raised : but in the book it is, “ then shall the rest of the *dead* be raised.”

Clerk. Is he guilty of the indictment, that sentence excepted?

One of the jurymen said, I cannot in conscience find him guilty, because the words in the indictment and the book do not agree.

Judge. That is only through a mistake of the clerk, and in that one sentence only. You may find him guilty of all, that sentence excepted : but why did you come in before you were agreed?

Foreman. We thought we had been agreed.

Judge. You must go out again and agree. And as for you that say you cannot in conscience find him guilty, if you say so again without giving reason for it, I shall take an order with you.

Then the jury withdrew, and in a little time returned again and brought in this verdict ; that he was guilty of the indictment, that sentence wherein *devils* is inserted instead of *dead* only excepted.

Mr. Keach was called to the bar, and the judge proceeded and passed sentence as follows.

Judge. Benjamin Keach, you are here convicted for writing, printing, and publishing a seditious and schismatical book, for which the court's judgment is this, and the court doth award. That you shall go to gaol for a fortnight without

Sentence.

bail or mainprize ; and the next Saturday to stand upon the pillory at Aylesbury in the open market, from eleven o'clock till one, with a paper upon your head with this inscription : *For writing, printing, and publishing a schismatical book, entitled, The Child's Instructor or a New and Easy Primmer.* And the next Thursday, to stand, in the same manner and for the same time, in the market at Winslow ; and then your book shall be openly burnt before your face by the common hangman, in disgrace of you and your doctrine. And you shall forfeit to the king's majesty the sum of twenty pounds, and shall remain in gaol until you find sureties for your good behaviour, and for your appearance at the next assizes ; then *to renounce your doctrines*, and make such public submission as shall be enjoined you. Take him away, keeper !

Keach. I hope I shall *never renounce* those truths which I have written in that book.

Clerk. My lord, he says that he shall *never repent*. The judge making no answer to this, the goaler took him away.

It is unnecessary to make any remarks on the arbitrary manner in which this trial was conducted, and on the means by which the verdict was extorted. The common-prayer book was now the standard of truth, and was placed upon a level with the statute law of the kingdom. Surely none could have expected that a Protestant judge would have sentenced any person to such a punishment for such conduct. But "the wicked walk on every side when the vilest of men are exalted," and therefore it was not difficult to procure a jury suited to such a purpose.

The attempts made to obtain a pardon, or a relaxation of this severe sentence, were ineffectual ; and the sheriff took care that every thing should be punctually performed. He was accordingly kept close prisoner till the Saturday, and

Impilloried at Aylesbury.

agreeably to his sentence was brought to the pillory at Aylesbury. Several of his religious friends and acquaintances accompanied him thither; and when they expressed their sorrow for his hard case, and the injustice of his sufferings, he said with a cheerful countenance, *The cross is the way to the crown.* His head and hands were no sooner fixed in the pillory, but he began to address himself to the spectators to this effect.—Good people, I am not ashamed to stand here this day, with this paper on my head. My Lord Jesus was not ashamed to suffer on the cross for me; and it is for his cause that I am made a gazing-stock. Take notice, it is not for any wickedness that I stand here; but for writing and publishing his truths, which the Spirit of the Lord hath revealed in the holy scriptures.

A clergyman who stood by could not forbear interrupting him, and said, It is for writing and publishing errors; and you may now see what your errors have brought you to.

Mr. Keach replied, Sir, can you prove them errors? But before the clergyman could return an answer, he was attacked by some of the people, who told him of his being “pulled drunk out of a ditch.” Another upbraided him with having been found “drunk under a haycock.” Upon this the people, turning their attention from the sufferer in the pillory, laughed at the drunken priest, insomuch that he hastened away with the utmost disgrace and shame.

After the noise of this was over, the prisoner began to speak again, saying, It is no new thing for the servants of the Lord to suffer and be made a gazing-stock; and you that are acquainted with the scriptures know that the way to the crown is by the cross. The apostle saith, “that through much tribulation we must enter into the kingdom of heaven;” and Christ saith, “He that is ashamed of me and of my

His Fortitude.

words, in an adulterous and sinful generation, of him shall the Son of Man be ashamed, before the Father, and before the holy angels." But he was frequently interrupted by the goaler, who told him that he must not speak ; and that if he would not be silent, he must force him to it. After he had stood some time silent, getting one of his hands at liberty, he pulled his bible out of his pocket, and held it up to the people ; saying, take notice, that the things which I have written and published, and for which I stand here this day a spectacle to angels and to men, are all contained in this book, as I could prove out of the same, if I had opportunity.

The goaler again interrupted him, and with great anger enquired who gave him the book. Some said that his wife gave it him. The good woman stood near him all the time of his being in the pillory, and frequently spoke in vindication of the principles for which he suffered. But Mr. Keach said that he took it out of his pocket. The goaler then took it from him, and fastened up his hand again. It was impossible however to keep him from speaking, for he began again and spoke as follows.

" It seems that I cannot be suffered to speak to the cause for which I stand here ; neither could I be suffered to speak the other day ; but it will plead its own innocency, when the strongest of its opposers shall be ashamed. I do not speak this out of prejudice to any person, but do sincerely desire that the Lord would convert them and convince them of their errors, that their souls may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus. Good people, the concernment of souls is very great, so that Christ died for them ; and truly a concernment for souls was that which moved me to write and publish those things for which I now suffer, and for which I could suffer far greater things than these. It concerns you therefore

Impilloried at Winslow.

to be very careful, otherwise it will be very sad with you at the revelation of the Lord Jesus from heaven, for we must all appear before his tribunal." Here he was again interrupted, and forced to be silent a considerable time ; but at length he ventured to speak again. " I hope (said he) the Lord's people will not be discouraged at my suffering. Oh, did you but experience the great love of God, and the excellencies that are in him, it would make you willing to go through any sufferings for his sake. And I do account this the greatest honour that ever the Lord was pleased to confer upon me."

After this he was not able to speak much more, for the sheriff came in great rage, and said, if he would not be silent he should be gagged ; and the officers were ordered to keep the people at a greater distance from him, though they declared they could not do it. After a long silence he ventured to speak again. " This said he is one yoke of Christ's, which I experience is easy to me, and a burden which he doth make light." Finding he could not be allowed to speak, he kept silence until the two hours were expired, except uttering this sentence : " Blessed are they that are persecuted for righteousness sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven." When the full time according to his sentence was ended, the under keeper lifted up the board of the pillory ; and as soon as his head and hands were at liberty, he blessed God with a loud voice for his great goodness towards him !

On the Saturday following he stood in the same manner and for the same time at Winslow, the town where he lived, and had his book burnt before him according to the sentence.

Crosby says he was not able to obtain any particulars of this good man's behaviour at Winslow, and for the account here given he was indebted to a person who was present,

Conventicle Act.

and who wrote the relation on the spot. This person remarked several things which proved the malice of his persecutors; as that he stood in the pillory two hours to the minute, which was a more strict execution of the sentence than he ever witnessed either in town or country. That others always had their hands at liberty; but Mr. Keach's were carefully kept in the holes almost all the time, which must have made his sufferings the more painful. Thus, said he, *judgment is turned away backward, and justice standeth afar off, for truth is fallen in the streets, and equity cannot enter. He that departeth from evil maketh himself a prey; and the Lord saw it, and it displeased him that there was no judgment.**

In this year 1664, an act was passed for suppressing "seditious conventicles." The preamble sets forth that the sectaries under pretence of tender consciences, at their meetings had contrived insurrections; and the act declares the 35th of Elizabeth to be in full force, which condemns all persons refusing peremptorily to come to church, after conviction, to banishment, and in case of return, to death without benefit of clergy. It enacts further, that if any person above the age of sixteen, after July 1st 1664, shall be present at any meeting under colour or pretence of any exercise of religion in other manner than is allowed by the liturgy or practice of the church of England, where shall be five or more persons than the household, shall for the first offence, upon record made upon oath under the hand and seal of a justice of peace, suffer three months imprisonment, or pay a sum not exceeding five pounds; for the second offence, six months imprisonment, or ten pounds; and for the third offence, banishment to some of the American plantations for seven years.

This was a terrible scourge to the laity, put into the hands of a single magistrate without the verdict of a jury, the oath

* Crosby, vol. ii. p. 185—204. State Trials,

The Great Plague.

of the informer being deemed sufficient. Before this act took place, the people were courageous, and exhorted their ministers to preach till they went to prison; but when it came home to themselves, and they had been once in goal, they began to be cautious, and consulted among themselves how to avoid the edge of the law in the best manner they could. For this purpose their assemblies were frequently held at midnight, and in the most private places; yet notwithstanding all their caution, they were frequently disturbed: but it is remarkable that under all their hardships they never made the least resistance, but went quietly along with the soldiers or officers when they could not fly from them. The distress of so many families induced some to confine themselves within their own houses; some removed to the plantations; and others had recourse to occasional conformity, to avoid the penalty for not coming to church. The Independents, Baptists, and Quakers, declined the practice; for they said, if persecution was the mark of a false church, it must be absolutely wrong to join with one that was so notoriously guilty.

While these oppressive measures were pursued, and the nation in general was immersed in vice and irreligion, London was visited by *the plague*, which at that time is said to have been the most dreadful within the memory of man. It was preceded by an unusual drought: the meadows were parched and dried up like the highways, insomuch that there was no food for the cattle, which occasioned a murrain among them. The plague was so dreadful in the city and suburbs that eight or ten thousand died in a week. The richer inhabitants fled to the remoter counties; but the calamities of those who were left behind, and of the poorer sort are not to be described. Trade was at a full stand; all commerce between town and country was

The Clergy leave their Cures.

entirely cut off, and nobody would receive their wares. The country housekeepers and farmers durst not receive their city friends or relations till they had performed quarantine in the fields or out houses. If a stranger passed through the neighbourhood, they fled from him as from an enemy. In London the shops and houses were quite shut up, and many of them marked with a red cross and an inscription over the door, "Lord have mercy upon us!" Grass grew in the streets; and every night the bell-man went his rounds with a cart, crying, Bring out your dead! The number of those who died of the pestilence in London only, amounted to about one hundred thousand: how many died of it in other parts of the kingdom, where it also raged for nearly a year, cannot be ascertained.

The greatest part of the established clergy fled, and deserted their parishes at a time when their assistance was most wanted; but some of the ejected ministers ventured to preach in the vacant pulpits, imagining that so extraordinary a case would justify their disregard of the penal laws. The ministers who ventured on this undertaking were Mr. Thomas Vincent, Mr. Chester, Mr. Turner, Mr. Grimes, Mr. Franklin, and others. The face of death, and the arrows that flew among the people in darkness and at noon-day, awakened both preachers and hearers. Many who were at public worship one day were thrown into their graves the next. The cry of great numbers was, what shall we do to be saved! Such an awful time England never before saw.

But it will amaze all posterity, says Neal, that in a time both of war and of the plague, and when the nonconformist ministers were hazarding their lives in the service of the poor distressed congregations of London, the prime minister, Lord Clarendon, and his creatures, instead of mourning for

The Five Mile Act.

the sins of the nation and meditating a reformation of manners, should pour out all their vengeance upon the nonconformists in order to make their condition insufferable!

On October the 31st 1665, an act to restrain the Nonconformists from inhabiting corporations received the royal assent. This was called the Oxford or Five-mile Act, because it prohibited any minister from coming within five miles of any city or corporation, under very severe penalties, unless they would take the following oath. "I, A. B. do solemnly declare, that it is not lawful, upon any pretence whatsoever, to take up arms against the king; and that I do abhor the traitorous position of taking arms by his authority against his person, or against those that are commissioned by him, in pursuance of such commission. And I do swear that I will not at any time to come endeavour the alteration of the government, either in church or state. So help me, God."

The great body of nonconformist ministers refused this oath, choosing rather to leave their habitations, their relations and friends, and all visible support, than destroy the peace of their consciences. Those ministers who had some little estate or substance of their own, retired to some remote or obscure villages, or such little market towns as were not corporations, and more than five miles from the places where they had preached: but in many counties it was difficult to find such places of retirement, for either there were no houses untenanted, or they were annexed to farms which the minister would not occupy; or the people were afraid to admit them into their houses, lest they should be suspected as favourers of nonconformity.

The sufferings of the dissenters were incredibly great at this period; yet very few of the ministers conformed, and the body of the dissenters remained stedfast to their principles;

Cruelty of Archbishop Sheldon.

and the church, says Mr. Baxter, gained neither reputation nor numbers.

“ But as if the judgment of heaven (says Neal) upon this nation were not heavy enough, nor the legislature sufficiently severe, the bishops must now throw their weight into the scale. For in the very midst of the plague, July the 7th 1665, Archbishop Sheldon sent orders to the several bishops of his province to make a return of the names of all ejected nonconformist ministers, with their places of abode and manner of life; and the returns of the several bishops are still kept in the Lambeth library. The design of this scrutiny was to gird the laws closer upon the dissenters, and to know by what means they got their bread; and if this tender-hearted archbishop could have had his will, they must have starved, or gone into foreign countries for a livelihood.”

In addition to the terrible calamities of the war and plague, it pleased God this year to suffer the city of London to be laid in ashes by a dreadful conflagration, which began September the 2d 1666, in Pudding-lane, behind the place where the monument now stands. Within three or four days, thirteen thousand and two hundred dwelling houses were consumed, besides eighty-nine churches; among which was the cathedral of St. Paul's, many public structures, schools, libraries, and stately edifices. Multitudes of people lost their estates, their goods and merchandize, and some few their lives. The King, the Duke of York, and many of the nobility were spectators of the desolation, till at length it ceased almost as wonderfully as it began.

The next year was memorable for the fall of the persecuting Lord Clarendon, lord high chancellor of Great Britain, who had rendered himself obnoxious by his magisterial airs towards the king. He was impeached at the bar of the house of lords,

Banishment of Lord Clarendon.

in the name of all the commons of England, of high treason, for sundry arbitrary and tyrannical proceedings contrary to law, by which he had acquired a greater estate than could be honestly procured at such a time. The earl, not daring to abide the storm, withdrew to France—leaving a paper behind him in which he denied almost every article of the charge; but the parliament voted it scandalous, and ordered it to be burnt by the common hangman; and he was banished the king's dominions for life. Thus *the measure he meted to others was meted to him again*. Little did he think, when he passed sentence on Benjamin Keach that in less than four years a sentence equally painful, and indeed far more so owing to its being just, would be passed on himself, and executed with as great rigour, and with as unrelenting severity.

CHAP. IX.

A. D. 1667—1685.

THE fall of Lord Clarendon, the great patron of persecuting power, and the removal of Archbishop Sheldon and Bishop Morley from the councils of the King, occasioned a considerable alteration in favour of the dissenters, so that they went publicly to their meetings in London without fear.

The king appeared disposed to promote a general toleration, but the House of Commons were so enraged at the favours shewn to the Nonconformists that they presented a petition to his majesty, praying him that he would issue a proclamation for enforcing the laws against conventicles. To this the

The King's opinion of the Clergy.

king consented, and a proclamation declared, "he would not suffer such notorious contempt of the laws to go unpunished &c." The proclamation however produced but little effect, as the people still ventured to attend the meetings, although forbidden by the laws. To this different causes contributed. One was the want of churches, in consequence of the fire of London. In addition to this, the indolence of the established clergy, and the laboriousness of the nonconformist ministers were so apparent, that a decided preference was given to the latter by all who had any regard for religion.

Bishop Burnet acknowledges this, and says, "The king was highly offended at the behaviour of most of the bishops. When complaints were made of the conventicles, the king told me (says he) that the clergy were chiefly to blame; for if they had lived well, and gone about their parishes, and taken pains to convince the nonconformists, the nation might have been well settled; but they thought of nothing but to get good benefices, and keep a good table."—In another conversation with bishop Burnet about the ill state of the church, his majesty said, "If the clergy had done their part, it had been easy to run down the nonconformists; but they will do nothing, and will have me do every thing, and most of them do worse than if they did nothing. I have a very honest chaplain (said he) to whom I have given a living in Suffolk; but he is a very great blockhead, and yet he has brought all his parish to church. I cannot imagine what he could say to them, for he is a very silly fellow; but he has been about from house to house, and I suppose his nonsense suited their nonsense; and in reward of his diligence, I have given him a bishoprick in Ireland."

Conventicle Act.

The measures of the king to promote a general toleration doubtless flowed from a desire to tolerate the Roman catholics; but to this the dissenters were very averse, and rather chose to suffer themselves than be instrumental to the bringing in of popery.

In 1670, the House of Commons proposed the addition of some new clauses to the Conventicle Act, to which the court agreed, as they thought this would reduce the presbyterians to the necessity of petitioning for a *general toleration*. "If we would have opened the door, (says Mr. Baxter,) that their toleration might have been charged upon us, as done for our sakes and by our procurement, we might in all likelihood have had our part in it; but I shall never be one of them who shall consent to petition for the papists' liberty. No craft of jesuits or prelates shall make me believe that it is necessary for the nonconformists to take this odium upon themselves." The court bishops were for the bill, but the moderate clergy were against it. To the honour of Bishop Wilkins it ought to be recorded, that he spoke against it in the house; and when the king desired him in private to be quiet, he replied that "he thought it an ill thing both in conscience and in policy: therefore, as he was an Englishman and a Bishop, he was bound to oppose it. And since by the laws and constitution of England, and by his majesty's favour, he had a right to debate and vote, he was neither ashamed nor afraid to own his opinion in that matter." The bill however passed both houses, and received the royal assent, April 11. 1670.

This bill was the cause of incredible hardships to all the nonconformists, and many of the Baptists suffered severely by it. It was now enacted as follows:—"The preachers or

Conventicle Act.

teachers in any Conventicle shall forfeit twenty pounds for the first, and forty for the second offence. And also those who knowingly suffer any conventicles in their houses, barns, yards, &c. shall forfeit twenty pounds. Any justice of peace, on the oath of two witnesses or any other sufficient proof, may record the offence under his hand and seal; which record shall be taken in law for a full and perfect conviction, and shall be certified at the next quarter sessions. The fines above mentioned may be levied by distress and sale of the offender's goods and chattels, and in case of the poverty of such offender, upon the goods and chattels of any other person or persons who shall be convicted of having been present at the said conventicle, at the discretion of the justice of peace, so as the sum to be levied on any one person, in case of the poverty of others, do not amount to above ten pounds for any one meeting. The constables, headboroughs, &c. are to levy by warrant from the justice, and the money is to be divided, one third for the use of the king, another third for the poor, and the other third *to the informer or his assistants, regard being had to their diligence and industry in discovering, dispersing, and punishing the said conventicles.* The fines upon ministers for preaching are to be levied also by distress; and in case of poverty, upon the goods and chattels of any other present; and the like upon the house where the conventicle is held, and the money to be divided as above.

“And it is further enacted, that justices of the peace, constables, headboroughs, &c. may be warranted with what aid, force, and assistance they shall think necessary, to break open and enter into any house or place where they shall be informed of the conventicle, and take the persons so assembled

Sufferings of Baptists at Bedford.

into custody: and the lieutenants, or other commissioned officers of the militia, may get together such force and assistants as they think necessary to dissolve, dissipate, and disperse such unlawful meetings, and take the persons into custody." To ensure the strict execution of this act, it was added, "That if any justice of the peace refuse to do his duty in the execution of this act, he shall forfeit five pounds."

Great numbers were prosecuted in consequence, and many industrious families reduced to poverty. Several ministers were confined in goals and close prisons, and warrants issued against them and their hearers, to the amount of large sums of money. Neal says, that in the diocese of Salisbury, the prosecution was the hottest, owing to the instigation of Bishop Ward, many hundreds being driven from their families and trades.

The principal information we possess relating to the Baptists at this time refers to the counties of Bedford and Sussex. As these accounts were published at the time, and in a circumstantial manner, they are very interesting, and tend to show the way in which these cruel laws were executed throughout the kingdom.

The first we shall notice is a pamphlet entitled, *A true and impartial narrative of some illegal and arbitrary proceedings by certain justices of the peace and others, against several innocent and peaceable nonconformists in and near the town of Bedford, upon pretence of putting in execution the late Act against Conventicles: together with a brief account of the late sudden and strange death of the Grand Informer, and one of the most violent malicious prosecutors against these poor people. Published for general information, in the year 1670.*

Continued.

This narrative is preceded by an anonymous letter, which is as follows :—

“ SIR,

“ Some proceedings at Bedford, pursuant to the late act of parliament, a true narrative whereof is herein inclosed, afford matter both of wonder and dislike to such as have observed them. When you have perused the paper, you will conclude with me and others, that this text needs no comment. It is plain that in despite of Magna Charta, and in defiance to all laws and rules of righteousness, neighbourhood, and humanity, they resolve to ruin the nonconformists, though the instruments are no ways able to recompense the king’s and kingdom’s damage thereby. The sufferers are cheerful and peaceable; their immediate persecutors are the scum of the people, and chiefly the appurtenants of the commissarie’s court. The most forward instrument of that sort is one that hath openly avowed and declared his esteem for popery above other religions. If some check be not given to these extravagancies, many families will suddenly be ruined, and the public trade and welfare endangered; which the interest of some, and the rage, revenge, and enmity of others will not admit regard to. Pardon this trouble, when I have told you that the particulars of the narrative are all true, and will be proved in every part. So I have remaining at present only to tell you, I am, Sir,

Your assured friend.”

The narrative then proceeds :—

“ On Lord’s day, May the 15th, at the dwelling house of one *John Fen*, many persons being assembled for religious

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exercise, West and Feckman, two apparitors, by a warrant from one Mr. Foster, who is a justice of peace and the commissarie's deputy, did enter the house, and force the meeters to Mr. Foster's house, who fined every one of them severally according to their reputed ability; and committed the preacher to prison for words he spake against the church of England, then occasioned by the discourse of Mr. Foster. By virtue of their warrant, the apparitors charged a constable and a churchwarden to assist them; but they neglecting, being not willing to the work as they themselves declared, were fined each of them five pounds; though by intercession of friends, the fines are not yet levied.

“ On Friday following, Thomas Battison, another churchwarden, and the most active and busy in the work, having with much labour and difficulty called together the overseers of the poor, and the constables of the several wards, to levy the several fines upon the goods of the meeters, did first attempt to levy the fine of ten pounds upon the goods of one *John Burdolf*, a malster, who having sold all his malt before the act commenced, and delivered his malt and malt-house into his possession to whom he had sold them, none of the officers would join with Battison to break open the door of the malt-house, or to distrain the malt, though he most importunately charged and besought them to do it, promising to bear them harmless.

“ While Battison and the other officers were debating in the open yard before the malthouse door, a great number of all sorts of persons gathered about them, expressing by turns their indignation against him for attempting this against *Burdolf*, whom the whole town knew to be a just and harmless man. The common sort of people covertly fixing a calf's

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tail to Battison's back, and deriding him with shouts and halloos, he departed without taking any distress there; and advanced with other officers to *Edward Covington's* shop, to levy five shillings for his wife being at the meeting, where none of the officers would distrain but Battison, who took a brass kettle; but when he had brought it to the street door, none of the officers would carry it away; neither could he hire any one to do it in two hours time, though he offered money to such needy persons among the company as wanted bread. At last he got a youth for sixpence to carry the kettle less way than a stone's throw, to an inn-yard where he had before hired a room to lodge such goods under pretence to lodge grain; but when the youth had carried the kettle to the inn-gate, being hooted at all the way by the common spectators, the inn-keeper would not suffer the kettle to be brought into his yard; and so his man set it out in the middle of the street, none regarding it, till towards night a poor woman that receiveth alms was caused by an overseer to carry it away.

"From hence, Battison, with the rest of the officers at his heels, proceeded to distrain one *John Spencer* for a fine of forty shillings; but his shop door being locked, Battison could not prevail with the officers to join with him in breaking it open. So this day ended, without any other distress than that of the kettle.

"The next day, which was the market day, the justices understanding how Battison was discouraged in his work by the backwardness of the other officers, and the open discountenance of the other people, commanded the officers to break open the doors and levy the distresses, and promised to bear them harmless. Immediately, old Battison, with a

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file of soldiers and constables, in the middle of market time advanced again to the malthouse of John Burdolf, situate in an inn-yard in the middle of the market-place, and breaks open the doors, but not without long time and trouble, all people refusing to lend either bars or hammers, which they sent from place to place to borrow for that purpose. When the doors were broken open, Battison distrained fourteen quarters of malt, but it was night before he could carry them away; for though the market was then full of porters, yet none of them would assist, though charged strictly by Battison and the constables, but ran all away, and left their fares; some of them saying, they would be hanged, drawn, and quartered rather than they would assist in that work; for which cause the justices committed two of them, which they could take, to the gaol.

“The next day, being Lord’s day, fines were doubled upon the meeters before the first could be levied; for they assembled again at the same house, according to their custom. Battison, with the two apparitors, by another warrant from Mr. Foster, entered the meeting-place about nine o’clock in the morning; but the meeters refused to depart before their exercise was ended, unless forced to it. Battison sends word of it to Mr. Foster, who returns a verbal order, that Battison should charge certain gentlemen of the town, whose names he had sent by the messenger, to assist him; which Battison accordingly did, going to their houses to call them, though there were near a hundred common people spectators in the streets, and none of them then charged to assist, and also trained-band soldiers ready in town for this service, partly at the charge of these gentlemen whom Battison had so warned to assist, and who were so warned, as is supposed,

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upon design to have them incur the penalties of five pounds for their refusing. About ten in the morning the meeters went with Battison and the apparitors to the Swan in Bedford, where being kept till four in the afternoon, and their names taken by the justices, they were set at liberty.

“Next morning, Mr. Foster appears early in the streets with Battison, the two apparitors, a file of soldiers, and some constables, to see the fines levied upon the meeters goods; charging to his assistance such persons as he sees, and sending for others to their houses, but got few or none besides his first company; most of the tradesmen, journeymen, labourers, and servants having either left the town, or hid themselves to avoid his call. The town was so thin of people that it looked more like a country village than a corporation; and the shops being generally shut, it seemed like a place visited by the pestilence.

“The first distress was attempted upon the goods of one *Nicholas Hawkins*, a cutler, who was fined forty shillings; but his goods being removed beforehand, and his house visited with the small-pox, the officers declined entering. Mr. Foster meeting here one John Croker, who was also fined three pounds, commanded his assistance; but refusing he was committed to the custody of one of the town-serjeants then present.

“From hence Mr. Foster went into the house of one *Michael Shepheard*, a shoe-maker, who was fined five shillings; where a distress was made not only for the same, but also for one shilling more, because he being asked by Mr. Foster whether he were at church the day before, and not answering, only desired to know who accused him or would swear it.

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“The next house in their way was one *Thomas Honeylove's*, a journeyman shoemaker, fined twenty shillings or more; whose children lying sick of the small-pox in the house where his goods were, the officers were unwilling to enter. Mr. Foster therefore drew them off to one *Thomas Cowper's*, a heelmaker, who was fined forty shillings. Here they distrained three cart-loads of wood, cut especially for his work, which was of more value than any of his household goods, he being a poor man, and living only by making heels and lasts.

“The next remove was to one *John Croker's* house, beforementioned, a linen draper, fined three pounds. Having removed his goods to another place, Battison would not trouble himself to distrain them, but said he would take a better opportunity.

“Near this place lived one *Daniel Rich*, a tanner, and constable of that ward, who being fined five shillings for his wife, had his best wearing-coat distrained by the immediate order of Mr. Foster.

“From hence he marches to *John Spencer*, a grocer, whose goods he distrained for a fine of about forty shillings. The next neighbour was *William Jay*, a baker, who was distrained for five shillings. Next to him lived one *Edward Isaac*, a blacksmith, fined forty shillings for himself and his wife; from whom they took away locks, shovels, and the very anvil upon which he forged his work. Battison would have pulled down the bellows also, but that it required more time and labour than his itch to greater prizes in other places would allow him. Hastening to their market, they leave Paul's parish, and invade that of Cuthberts; where they find the door of one *Thomas Arthur*, a pipe-maker, locked, who was fined five pounds. Before they broke open the door,

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it was unlocked on the inside, and Mr. Foster entered to distrain the goods. Arthur desired to know how much money he had distrained for; and Mr. Foster replied that it was for eleven pounds. Arthur then desired to see the warrant; which being produced, he saw the fine was but six pounds; but Mr. Foster replied, that there was five pounds more for keeping his door locked! When Thomas Arthur perceived that Mr. Foster would distrain all his goods, he said, Sir, what shall my children do? Shall they starve? Mr. Foster replied, That so long as he was a rebel, his children should starve! And so, on Wednesday following, old Battison, and the two apparitors, with a file of musquiteers, and a cart, carried away what household goods they thought fit, and all the wood necessary to his trade, not leaving so much as would suffice for burning a kiln of pipes ready set, though earnestly desired by the poor pipe-maker himself, and others of Battison's company.

“ Mr. Foster, having done his work at the pipe-maker's, proceeds to one *Robert Brown's*, a gardener, distraining all his goods for a fine supposed to be three pounds. Hastening to the chief place they aimed at, they passed into Peter's parish to the house of Mrs. *Mary Tilney*, a gentlewoman well descended, and of good estate, who was fined twenty pounds. To make her exemplary in suffering for that offence, Mr. Foster himself, attended by his public notary, will see the fine effectually levied upon her goods; and a cart being provided for that purpose, they distrained and carried away all the goods in her house which they thought worth their labour, even to the hangings of the room and the sheets off her bed, insomuch that the widow was forced that night to borrow sheets of her neighbours; nor did they leave her so much as one feather bed on which to lay the sheets. She

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had indeed more household goods, but as she could not with safety possess them for her necessary use, and foreseeing the waste intended upon them, she had prudently secured them abroad. The value of the goods taken away by the officers was supposed to be between forty and fifty pounds: but Mrs. Tilney was more troubled at the crying and sighing of her poor neighbours about her, than for the loss of her goods, which she took very cheerfully. And so the officers left her, having finished this day's work.

“The next day more fines were to be levied on the rest of the meeters; but Battison finding it would lie hard upon him and the two apparitors, for want of more help than they had the day before, and foreseeing that if he deferred charging assistance till he began his work, all people would get out of the way, he walked alone in the streets early in the morning, looking into the shops, to charge men beforehand to be ready. As soon as this was perceived by the people, most of the tradesmen and other inhabitants instantly deserted the town, or hid themselves as before. About ten o'clock, old Battison, with the soldiers and constables, whom he had warned overnight to be in readiness, marched up the High-street, where he levied the fine of five pounds upon *John Fen*, the haberdasher before-mentioned, at whose house the meeting was; taking away all the hats and hatbands in his shop, and the next day carted away his household goods. Having thus dealt with Fen, he proceeded to deal the same measure with another hatter, one *Samuel Fen*, who was also fined five pounds, and dealt with as his brother had been before him.

“The next fine they proceeded to levy was forty shillings upon the goods of one *Thomas Woodward*, a maltster. But one Richard Layfield being in possession of the malthouse, to whom the maltster had sometime before sold all his malt, and

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quitted the possession, old Battison met with a stop, and was persuaded to defer distraining till Richard Layfield had spoken to the justices who were then met at the Swan. He apprised them that Thomas Woodward owed him sixty pounds which he had formerly lent him in money, and that he was bound to deliver two hundred and ninety quarters of malt to others, for money and barley had of them ; and therefore on condition that Layfield should acquit him of the sixty pounds, and oblige himself to deliver the malt aforesaid, he did sell and deliver to Layfield all the malt and barley lying in his malthouse, and that there was no fraud therein. Layfield also produced the deed to the justices, and averred that the reason of making this bargain was to secure his sixty pounds. But notwithstanding all this, Sir George Blundell, one of the justices, said, That Richard Layfield went about herein to defraud the king, and therefore bound him over to the next assizes. He also said, that so long as Thomas Woodward aforesaid offended, the malt should be distrained, and that he would leave the meeters worth nothing ; and when he had done that, he would fill the prisons with them. He added, If they do not like it, let them stand up and defend themselves as we did.

“ There were no further distresses made last week. It is conjectured that some falling out between the Mayor and Mr. Foster on Wednesday delayed their proceedings. It seems the Mayor was not willing that Battison, who is churchwarden for Paul's, should distrain in the two parishes on the other side of the river where the Mayor lived : but on Monday the 30th instant, Feckman the chief apparitor, with the churchwarden, constable, and overseer of Mary's parish in Bedford, began to distrain. The person's name is *Joseph Rulfhead*, at whose house they first began, and the fine they levied was three

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pounds. On their approach he desired to see the warrant, and not finding his name in it, he discharged Feckman from coming upon his ground. After an appeal to the justice however, they took from him two timber trees of about seven pounds value, instead of three pounds.

“ On the same day, the officers went to distrain one *John Clarke*, a grocer, for forty shillings ; and breaking open his door, they took his household goods, those in his shop being of little value. From thence they went to the house of one *John Rush*, waggoner, to levy a distress of three pounds upon him, where they seized a new cart and wheels for the same.

“ The same day, in part of a village called *Cotton-End*, near Bedford, the officers distrained upon several persons who had been convicted by the justices, for having a meeting at the house of one *Thomas Thorowgood*, and who were fined to a greater value than the whole of their estates amounted to. They are stripped of all their substance, and the said *Thorowgood* hath not left to him so much as his loom to work with, being a weaver, and by his labour therein supporting himself and his family.—But because there are several remarkable fair circumstances relating to this matter which clearly evince the undue and most inhuman dealings of some of the justices, especially of Sir George Blundell, with the poor people last mentioned, a particular and exact account of the whole proceeding will be here inserted.

“ From the discourse of a little child who said there had been a meeting at the house of *Thomas Thorowgood* in *Cotton-End*, the wife of *John Pryor*, victualler, resorted to Sir George Blundell, and made oath of the child's report to her. Sir George issued a warrant for the appearance of several persons of that endship, suspected to have been there, and who appeared before several justices at the Swan in Bed-

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ford. On being examined, they neither confessed that a meeting had been held, or that they had been there. The justices dealt severely with them, assuring them that such as would confess who was the preacher should be acquitted: but no confession was made, and generally they referred to any proof that could be brought against them, not being willing to accuse themselves or others. The justices however concluded that there was sufficient ground to convict them, and assessed fines upon them severally. Thomas Thorowgood's fine, at whose house the meeting was said to be, was nineteen pounds. The officers distrained upon him, and took all that he had, with the implements of his trade; and the said Thorowgood and his wife are since departed from their dwelling, and gone away.

“The wife of one *George Winright*, and a son-in-law of Winright's were fined ten pounds five shillings, for having been at the meeting. George Winright is tenant to the Earl of Exeter; and being in arrears of rent to his landlord about Michaelmas last, he prevailed with his two sons-in-law to be bound for him for the payment of the money due; and for the indemnity of his two sons he passed over to them all his goods and chattels by a bill of sale. The writing was afterwards destroyed, and the father pleaded that there were no goods of the sons there, though they were once in their possession. The cancelling of the writing however was deemed a collusion, and the officers were ordered to proceed in the distress. Winright drives away his cattle, sells some of them at Potten market, and others to one Miller, an inhabitant of the same parish. Sir George Blundell sent a warrant for the buyer and seller to appear before him, to whom they gave information of the sale and payment. But all their pleas being disregarded, the said knight demanded sureties for their ap-

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pearance at the assizes, declaring with his wonted vehemence that he would bind them both over, and distrain the cattle likewise. Winright being frightened, promised to pay the ten pounds, and accordingly did so; but a few days after, being told by a lawyer that he had done wrong, he repaired to Sir George, acquainting him with what the lawyer had said, and entreated his favour. This without delay he imparted, beating him well for his pains.

“*Thomas Langley*, an inhabitant of Cotton-End, being also fined five pounds ten shillings for attending the suspected meeting, presumed on the favour of Sir George, on account of his having lately been his servant, and told the officers he would pay the money if he could not get any abatement. He appealed to his master; but not prevailing for any such kindness, he was unwilling to pay the fine, having very little stock, and owing for the greatest part of that, as well as being in arrears with his landlord. But the officers having strict charge to take all he had and sell it for five pounds ten shillings, they distrained his three cows, really worth ten pounds; and going to sell them, a neighbour out of compassion paid the officer the fine, and sent the cows back to the owner.

“Some other persons of the said endship were distrained upon by the officers, and had their little substance taken from them and deposited in the house of Pryor, whose wife at first informed of the said meeting, and where the goods still remain to be sold to any who are willing to buy the same, that with the proportion allotted to the informer, the said Pryor may again have some money to put into his purse, having prodigally wasted all that he lately sold a considerable estate for, which lay in the aforesaid endship.”

We are not acquainted with the writer of this pamphlet, but all the parties mentioned we have no doubt belonged to

Persecution in Sussex.

the church at Bedford, as most of their names are found in the records of that society; and several of them were ministers; of whom we intend to give some further account in the biographical part of our work.

This year also was published a pamphlet entitled, *A narrative of the late proceedings of some justices and others, pretending to put in execution the late act against conventicles, against several peaceable people in and about the town of Lewes in Sussex, only for their being quietly met to worship God: together with a brief account of the like proceedings against some at Brighthelmstone, and others at Chillington in the same county.*—The author of this narrative, who Crosby supposes was Mr. Jeremiah Ives, a Baptist minister in London, introduces it with a short epistle to the reader, which is as follows. “Thou art here presented with an account of some proceedings, pretended to be grounded upon the late act against conventicles. Of the act itself I say nothing at all; nor do I call these proceedings, said to be grounded thereon, either arbitrary or illegal. Read, and be judge thyself. Only be sure of this, that thou hast a faithful narrative. What you find therein, relating to the conviction of these persons, was reported by some officers then present, or dropped from the informers themselves; and the witness of an enemy, we used to say, is a double testimony.”

“On May the 29th 1670, being the Lord’s day, some Christians in and about Lewes in the county of Sussex, to the number of five hundred, say their adversaries, were met together to hear the word of God; and that they might if possible avoid exasperating their enemies on one hand, and provide for their own security on the other, the meeting was appointed at three o’clock in the afternoon, an hour of the greatest privacy. People were appointed to go to a house

Violence of the Magistrates.

where they usually met, within a mile of Lewes; but from thence they were directed to a private by-lane, within a quarter of a mile of the house. 'This may be enough to take off the imputation of contempt of authority so frequently cast upon them by some, and that of rashness as often objected by others.'

It is not said who the minister was, but that he was fined forty pounds, and forty of his hearers five shillings each; and the minister being unable to pay, his fine was levied upon five of the people. The manner in which these fines were collected is so similar to that mentioned in the Bedford narrative that it is unnecessary to relate it.*

By these statements it will be seen what was the rage and malice which prevailed at this time against the nonconformists, by means of the magistrates and the clergy. It is said by Crosby, from a manuscript of Mr. Josiah Diston, who had often been committed to prison and bound over to several assizes and sessions for having private meetings in his house, "that he found the spirit and temper of the judges and justices in those times to be such, that when any person or accusation came before them concerning dissenters, they were zealous in aggravating their crimes; and many who were usually silent in other cases, were very forward speakers in these. Whereas, in other criminal matters they were cool, and very willing to show all the favour they could."† Though many of the bishops did not appear in these persecutions, choosing rather to throw the blame upon the civil magistrates, yet some of them, as Bishop Ward and Bishop Gunning, often disturbed the meetings in person. This last gentleman was so zealous in the cause, that he sunk his character by giving a public challenge to the Presbyterians, Independents, Baptists, and Quakers, and appointed three days for the disputa-

* Crosby, vol. ii. 244—258. † Ibid. 258.

Zeal of Bishop Gunning

tion; in the cathedral church at Chichester, on the first of which his lordship went into the pulpit in the church, where was a considerable congregation, and charged the former three with sedition and rebellion out of their books, but would hear no reply. The Baptists on the second day were treated with much greater respect than the Presbyterians and Independants. The bishop probably recollected the dispute which he had with Mr. Henry Denne in St. Clements church by Temple Bar in 1658—and from this circumstance was able to judge the strength of their arguments. When the day on which he was to dispute with the Quakers arrived, they had summoned their friends from different parts of Sussex and Hampshire, and when the bishop railed on them, they paid him in his own coin, and with interest too. The bishop not being able to withstand this furious attack, prudently left the field of action, and on his going to his house his opponents followed him, and one of them as he was passing pulling his lawn sleeve said, “The Hireling fleeth! The Hireling fleeth!”

In the year 1672, the king published a declaration of indulgence, by which he asserted his absolute power as head of the church, without doubt as introductory to asserting arbitrary and unlimited dominion in the state. As this is somewhat curious, we shall here insert it.

“CHARLES REX.

“Our care and endeavour for the preservation of the rights and interests of the church have been sufficiently manifested to the world by the whole course of our government since our happy restoration, and by the many and frequent ways of *coercion* that we have used for reducing all erring and dissenting persons, and for composing the unhappy differences in matters of religion which we found among our subjects upon

Declaration of Indulgence.

our return ; but it being evident by the sad experience of twelve years that there is very little fruit of all these forcible courses, *we think ourselves obliged to make use of that supreme power in ecclesiastical matters which is not only inherent in us, but hath been declared and recognised to be so by several statutes and acts of parliament.* And therefore we do now accordingly issue this our declaration, as well for the quieting of our good subjects in these points as for inviting strangers in this conjuncture to come and live under us, and for the better encouragement of all to a cheerful following of their trades and callings ; from whence we hope, by the blessing of God, to have many good and happy advantages to our government ; as also for preventing for the future, the danger that might otherwise arise from private meetings and seditious conventicles.

“ And in the first place, we declare our express resolution, meaning, and intention to be, that the church of England be preserved and remain entire in its doctrine, discipline, and government, as now it stands established by the law ; and that this be taken to be as it is, the basis, rule, and standard, of the general and public worship of God, and that the orthodox conformable clergy do receive and enjoy the revenues belonging thereunto ; and that no person, though of a different opinion and persuasion, shall be exempt from paying his tithes and other dues whatsoever. And further we do declare, that no person shall be capable of holding any benefice, living, or ecclesiastical dignity or preferment of any kind, in this our kingdom of England, who is not exactly conformable.

“ We do in the next place declare our will and pleasure to be, that the execution of all, and all manner of penal laws in matters ecclesiastical, against whatsoever sort of Noncon-

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formists or Recusants, be immediately suspended, and they are hereby suspended; and all judges, judges of assizes, and gaol delivery, sheriffs, justices of the peace, mayors, bailiffs, and other officers whatsoever, whether ecclesiastical or civil, are to take notice of it, and pay due obedience thereunto.

“ And that there may be no pretence for any of our subjects to continue their illegal meetings and conventicles, we do declare that we shall from time to time allow a sufficient number of places, as they shall be desired, in all parts of this our kingdom, for the use of such as do not conform to the church of England, to meet and assemble in, in order to their public worship and devotion, which places shall be open and free to all persons.

“ But to prevent such disorders and inconveniences as may happen by this our indulgence, if not duly regulated, and that they may be the better protected by the civil magistrates, our express will and pleasure is, *that none of our subjects do presume to meet in any place, until such place be allowed, and the teacher of that congregation approved by us.*

“ And lest any should apprehend that this restriction will make our said allowance and approbation difficult to be obtained, we do farther declare that this our indulgence, as to the allowance of public places of worship and approbation of the preachers, shall extend to all sorts of Nonconformists and Recusants, except those of the Roman catholic religion; to whom we shall in no wise allow public places of worship, but only indulge them their share in the common exemption from the penal laws, and the exercise of their worship in their private houses.

“ And if after this our clemency and indulgence, any of our subjects shall pretend to abuse this liberty, and shall

Continued.

preach seditiously, or to the derogation of the discipline and government of the established church, or shall meet in places not allowed by us, We do hereby give them warning, and declare, that we will proceed against them with all imaginable severity : and we will let them see that we can be as severe to punish such offenders when so justly provoked, as we are indulgent to truly tender consciences.

“ Given at our Court at Whitehall, this 15th day of March, in the four-and-twentieth year of our reign.”

This deep-laid scheme, under the plausible pretence of *toleration*, was evidently designed to introduce popery. The protestant dissenters, till they could get meeting-houses built, were more restrained from meeting together than before, as they could not meet in private houses, and it was not likely they would be very forward to erect meeting-houses when they had no security for enjoying the use of them. The papists on the contrary, who appear to be left out of his majesty's gracious care, could meet when they pleased without molestation. Mr. Neal says, “ The protestant nonconformists had no opinion of this dispensing power, and were not forward to accept of liberty in this way. They were sensible that the indulgence was not granted out of love to them, nor would it continue any longer than it would serve the interests of popery. Some of them refused to accept this indulgence, because they would not admit that the king possessed a power to enact laws without the concurrence of parliament ; but most of the ministers both in town and country, wearied out by vexatious fines and imprisonments, and thinking it right to embrace every opportunity to preach the gospel, accepted it and took out licenses. Great numbers of the people attended their meetings, and a cautious and moderate address of thanks

Mr. Gifford's Licence.

was presented to the king for their liberty, but all were afraid of the consequences.”*

Of the Baptists who availed themselves of this indulgence, Mr. Andrew Gifford of Bristol applied for and obtained a licence under the king's hand and seal, and countersigned by Lord Arlington, one of the secretaries of state. The following is a true copy of the original, which is preserved with some papers of the late Dr. Andrew Gifford in the Baptist Library at Bristol.

“ CHARLES R.

“ Charles by the grace of God, King of England, Scotland, France, and Ireland, defender of the faith &c. To all mayors, bailiffs, constables, and other our officers and ministers, civil and military, whom it may concern, greeting. In pursuance of our declaration of the 15th of March, 1671—2, we do hereby permit and licence Andrew Gifford of our citty of Bristol, of the perswasion commonly called Baptists, to be a teacher, and to teach in any place licensed and allowed by us, according to our said declaration.

“ Given at our Court at Whitehall, the 5th day of September, in the twenty-fourth year of our reign, 1672. Gifford a teacher,

By his majesty's command.

ARLINGTON.”

This measure not answering the end proposed by the king, to introduce popery, was soon put an end to; and in the next year the Test Act was introduced, by which the dissenters were effectually prevented from holding any place under government without prostituting a solemn ordinance of Christ, by receiving the Lord's supper according to the usage of the church of England, in some parish church on some Lord's day immediately after divine service and sermon.

* Neal, vol. iv. p. 443—446.

Mr. Keach interrupted.

The dissenters were now again generally persecuted. Mr. Keach once more felt the fury of his adversaries, and was forced to move from place to place to avoid their rage. He was now a resident in London; and though the congregation of which he was pastor were very careful to conceal themselves, yet were they twice disturbed.

Being met together for religious worship in Jacob-street, in a private house down an alley, the churchwardens, with Mr. Cook a constable, came in and seized six persons, and had them before Justice Reading, who bound them over to appear at the quarter sessions. At another time they met together at the widow Colfe's house at Kennington, to celebrate the Lord's supper. At the conclusion they sung a hymn, which soon brought the officers of the parish to them; but from the conveniency of a back door they all escaped except one, who returning back again for something he had left behind was apprehended and taken. He was carried before a justice of the peace who committed him to prison, where he continued till some of his friends obtained bail for him. At the next quarter sessions he was fined, and his fine paid. The widow Colfe, at whose house they met, had a king's messenger sent to apprehend her; but being informed that she was nurse to one who lay sick of the small-pox, he departed with an oath, and sought no more after her.

Mr. Keach was afterwards sought for by one of the messengers of the press, for printing a little book entitled, *The Child's Instructor*. This was, as nearly as he could remember, the same as that for which he was imprisoned and set in the pillory. He was at this time a tenant of the noted informer Cook, but unknown to him by name. When Cook found out his name, he told him that one of the king's messengers was in quest of him, and that on account of his

A Vile Libel.

being his tenant he screened him. He was however soon after taken up by a warrant by the said messenger, who left him with another informer in the neighbourhood by whom he was carried before Justice Glover.

The justice being informed of a gentleman of worth and credit, John Roberts, M. D., a member of Mr. Keach's church, sent for him. When he arrived, pointing to Mr. Keach, he asked whether he knew that man. Yes, said the doctor, very well. Then said the justice, Will you be bound for him? Yes, replied the doctor, "body for body." The doctor's bail being taken, Mr. Keach was discharged; but in the issue he was fined twenty pounds, which he was obliged to pay.*

Many vile attempts were made to render the Baptists odious and contemptible. Amongst others, the following deserves notice.—In 1673, a pamphlet was published entitled, *Mr. Baxter Baptized in blood*. "This work, which we have perused, gives an account of a barbarous murder committed by four Anabaptists at Boston in New England, upon the body of a godly minister, named Josiah Baxter, for no other reason than that he had worsted them in disputation; which was set forth with all the circumstances and formalities of names, speeches, actions, times, and place, to make it look the more authentic; orderly and most pathetically describing the most execrable murder that ever was known: viz. of first stripping and cruelly whipping, then unbowelling and flaying alive, a sound and godly minister in his own house, in the midst of the howlings, groans, and shriekings of his dear relations lying bound before him. And the better to create belief, this sad story is pretended to be published by the mournful brother of the said murdered minister, named Ben-

* Crosby, vol. iii. p. 146—147.

Order of Council.

jamin Baxter living in Fenchurch street, London. Moreover the authors had dealt so artfully in order to avoid suspicion that they had prevailed on Dr. Samuel Parker to license it.

This infamous libel concludes in the following manner. "I have penned and published this narrative in perpetuam rei memoriam, that the world may see the spirit of these men, and that it may stand as an eternal memorial of their cruelty and hatred to all orthodox ministers."

Providentially this slander was not long undiscovered to be a gross and notorious falsehood, not containing a tittle of truth from first to last. A ship came from Boston about twenty days after the murder was said to have been committed; and two of the men, the master of the vessel and a merchant that was with him, affirmed upon oath before the lord mayor that they never knew any such man as Mr. Josiah Baxter; that they heard nothing of such a report in America, but believed it to be a very great falsehood. The deposition of these persons was published; the lord mayor published an interdict to prevent the sale of the pamphlet; and many of the publishers were committed to prison.

Through the influence of Mr. Kiffin at court, the matter underwent a rigid examination at the council board, when upon finding it a falsehood, the following order was published in the gazette.

"By the order of Council."

"Whereas there is a pamphlet lately published, entitled *Mr. Baxter baptized in blood*, containing a horrible murder committed by four Anabaptists upon the person of Mr. Josiah Baxter, near Boston in New England: the whole matter having been enquired into and examined at the council board, is found altogether false and fictitious.

EDWARD WALKER,

Dr. Parker suspected.

“The licenser, Dr. Samuel Parker, being also acquainted with the whole matter, confesseth his mistake, and too sudden credulity in the licensing so strange a pamphlet, as appears by the testimonial under his own hand.”

The doctor's testimonial was then given at length, which was read in council; May 30th 1675; but notwithstanding all he said, it was strongly suspected that he was the author of this scandalous libel. He was accordingly charged with it by the sâirical Andrew Marvel.

In reply to the question of Dr. Parker “whether he had never heard nor read of any public disturbances on account of religion?” “Yes (says Marvel) I have, and whosoever shall do so ought to be severely punished. Whether I have not heard of the merry pranks of John of Leyden and the Anabaptists of Germany? Yes, and they were handled as they deserved. Nay, moreover I have heard of the Anabaptists of *New England* in a book printed in the year 1673, entitled *Mr. Baxter baptized in blood*, which came out under the license of the *Author of the Ecclesiastical Politie*; being therefore as is to be supposed a book of theological nature. It was indeed a piece of Ecclesiastical History, which he thought it seems very fit to reconcile to the present juncture of Affairs, and recommend to the Genuis of the age: faithfully relating the cruel, barbarous, and bloody murther of Mr. Baxter an orthodox Minister who was killed by the Anabaptists and his skin most cruelly flea'd off from his body. And yet from beginning to end there never was a compleater falsehood invented. But after the *Author of the Ecclesiastical Politie* had in so many books of his own endeavoured to harangue up the notion into fury against tender consciences, there could not have been contrived by the wit of man, any thing more hopeful to have blooded them upon the Noncon-

Dispute with the Quakers.

formists than such a spectacle, and at the end of his orations to flourish the skin of an orthodox minister in this manner flea'd off by the Anabaptists. So that *Se non era vero fu ben trovato*. And in good earnest I dare not swear but it was the *Author of the Ecclesiastical Politics* own handy work. Several words I observe that he frequently and peculiarly makes use of in his other books, *Concerns, Villians, Villanies, Booby, &c.* but as for his brisk and laboured periods they may be traced every where."

Many other proofs are adduced to fix the odium of this transaction on Doctor Parker, whose name stands loaded with infamy for falling in with all the measures adopted by a popish prince to introduce popery and arbitrary power. But at length Mr. Marvel succeeded in silencing him and the whole tribe of scurrilous pamphleteers who were doubtless employed to bring the Nonconformists into contempt; and who were so afraid of this sensible and sarcastic writer, that a letter was left at his house signed J. G. and dated November 3, 1673, which concluded with these words; "If thou darest to print or publish any lie or libel against Doctor Parker, by the Eternal God I will cut thy throat."*

In this year 1674, an event took place which it will be necessary to mention, on account of the notice which was taken of it at the time and the confusion it occasioned. This was the controversy between the Baptists and the people called Quakers.

Mr. Thomas Hicks, a baptist minister, published several pamphlets in succession, entitled *A Dialogue between a Christian and a Quaker*, at which the Quakers were much offended, calling them malicious forgeries and fictions, stuffed with manifest slanders against their persons and princi-

* Rehearsal Transposed, part 2, p. 110—112.

Dispute Continued.

ples. To the first and second dialogues William Penn replied in a book entitled, *Reasons against railing, and truth against fiction*. To this Mr. Hicks answered in his third dialogue, entitled *The Quaker condemned out of his own mouth*. To this Mr. Penn replied in a work entitled, *The counterfeit christian detected*: wherein he charges Mr. Hicks with manifold perversions, downright lies and slanders, &c. On this Mr. Penn appealed to the Baptists in and about London, for justice against Thomas Hicks; threatening in case of a refusal, to pursue him, not only as Thomas Hicks, but as the Baptists' great champion, peculiar agent, or representative: and that it might be the more taken notice of, they employed persons to give the book away at the door of the several meeting-houses.

In consequence of these measures, the Baptists appointed a day August 28. 1674, for the examination of Thomas Hicks, and to prevent the Quakers from pleading any surprise, they sent a letter to William Penn, and another to George Whitehead, to be present at the examination. But receiving notice that they were out of town, they sent to John Osgoods, to tell him that he, or any of his friends might be present at the time appointed, for the matter say they, being matter of fact, and not of dispute, we conceive we may proceed to hear Thomas Hicks's defence. From this it is evident that the Quakers had no cause to complain of the Baptists, having taken the advantage of the absence of William Penn, and George Whitehead, nor could it be from the want of timely information that neither these nor any other Quaker was present.

On the appointed day the Baptists met, and Mr. William Kiffin opened the assembly, and gave an account of the occasion of their meeting. He then read the Quakers' appeal

Quakers' Errors.

and told them, that the business of the day was not to dispute, but to hear, examine, and judge whether Thomas Hicks was guilty of charging the Quakers falsely.

Thomas Hicks being present endeavoured to prove that he had not accused them falsely either as to their doctrines or practices. The charges he had made were that they held 1. That the light in every man is God. 2. That the soul is part of God, of God's being, without beginning, and also infinite. 3. That Jesus Christ was not a distinct person without us. 4. That Christ redeems himself. 5. That the scriptures were not the rule of life and practice to Christians. 6. The speaking of the Spirit in any one, is of greater authority than the scriptures. 7. That is no command of God to me which God hath given to another; neither did any of the saints act by that command which is given to another; every one obeyed his own command. 8. That justification by that righteousness which Christ fulfilled for us wholly without us is a doctrine of devils. 9. That the Quakers hold justification by works in the strictest notion. 10. That Christ fulfilled the law only as our pattern. 11. That the doctrine of Christ's satisfaction is irreligious and irrational. 12. That this body which dies shall not rise again.—As to the second head or matters of practice, he charged them with saying, 1. That it concerns them to render their adversaries as ridiculous as they can, and to make their friends believe they do nothing but contradict themselves; and if this fail, to insinuate something by way of question, that may slander them. 2. That they called such as asked them questions reprobates; and saying, they are in the sorcery and the witchcraft. 3. That William Penn, by the sense of the Eternal Spirit doth declare, that these cursings, railing, and lying answers of Edward Burroughs were the only fit answers to

Errors.

the priests trepanning questions. 4. They prefer their own pamphlets to the bible; for they call the one the voice of wisdom, breathings of true love, shield of faith, a spiritual glass, light risen out of darkness: but the scriptures are called letter, dead letter, paper, ink, and writing, carnal letter &c. 5. They bid people follow the light within, and if they do not, they revile them. 6. They say God himself is the immediate teacher of his people, and yet they appoint their minister to speak in such a place. 7. They entitle God to sleeveless errands. 8. They refuse public meetings to debate the chief things in difference between them and others, under pretence that they are cautious about running theirs into jeopardy. 9. That they own the scriptures as far as it agrees with the light within. 10. That the light within created heaven and earth, and is the immediate object of divine worship. 11. That if these things objected in the two first dialogues be true, William Penn hath confessed a Quaker is not a Christian. 12. William Penn accuses me of forgery in saying he has these words, viz. That were we what he represents us, the worst plagues, and judgments of God would be our portion. Which are his own words, with this little alteration, that he says, we might justly expect them to be our portion for ever. 13. William Penn charges me with a downright lie in giving this answer to John Whitehead's name, viz. That the plagues and judgments of God will follow thee; though it is attested too under Mr. John Gladman's own hand. 14. That their owning Christ is no other than a mere mystical romance; and that the light within them sees no necessity of a mediator. 15. Another lie William Penn charges me with is this; That the Quakers deny Christ's visible coming, and appearance in the world. 16. That they account the blood of Christ but as the blood of a

Decision.

common thief; which though William Penn says is an ungodly aspersion, is fully made out. 17. That one of their friends bid her husband take another woman. 18. That a revelation hath been pretended to excuse the payment of a just debt. 19. That some of their friends have excused some of the villanies, by pretence of an innocent life.

Mr. Hicks produced authorities from their printed works, in justification of all these serious charges; excepting the last three, and concerning these proposed to the Quakers that if they would chuse six sober and disinterested persons, that he would do the same, and if he could not give sufficient reasons for what he had objected against them he would contentedly submit unto what these persons did determine.

The charges and proofs were submitted to the investigation of a number of ministers and others, who having examined them, gave the following Certificate.

“ We whose names are under written do certify, that the aforesaid quotations are truly recited out of the books to which they refer. Witness our hands.

DANIEL DYKE,
THOMAS PAUL,
THOMAS WILCOCKS,
JONATHAN JENNINGS,
OWEN DAVIS,
WILLIAM DIX,
ROBERT MANTON,
HANSARD KNOLLYS,
HENRY FORTY,
ROBERT SNELLING,

THOMAS PLANT,
JOHN HUNTER,
JOHN VERNON,
JOHN GOSNOLD,
JOHN NORCOTT,
MAURICE KING,
JOSEPH MORTON,
JOHN SNELLING,
EDWARD NOBLE.

“ There were many more ministers and others ready to attest the same.

Quakers dissatisfied.

"N. B. We have abbreviated the account by much. There was an advertisement giving notice, that Mr. William Kiffin was not present by reason of business; but that he had since examined and found the quotations just.

WILLIAM KIFFIN."

"Mr. Hicks having thus met at the time and place appointed, made it appear out of the Quakers' own books, that he had not wronged them in the least. The church therefore to which he belonged, in public print cleared him from the Quakers' charge, and declared to the world that they as yet see no just cause of blame to be laid upon Thomas Hicks; but if any one shall object any new matter against him, if they signify the particulars in writing, they will return such answers thereunto, as to them may seem just, and that may also be to the satisfaction of all indifferent and unprejudiced minds, hoping that nothing shall lie upon them in point of duty towards him, but that by the grace of God they shall be ready to do it.

WILLIAM KIFFIN,

DANIEL DYKE,

THOMAS PAUL,

HANSARD KNOLLYS."

HENRY FORTY,

In the appeal which Mr. Obed Wills afterwards made to the Baptists against Mr. Danvers, he notices this decision, and says that "though the Quakers were disappointed as to the issue of their appeal yet it doth appear to all impartial and unprejudiced persons, that the Baptists have carried the whole business with a great deal of fairness and impartiality to both sides, as became just judges and good Christians, and vindicated the honesty of their brother from the unjust aspersions of adversaries."

Baptists publish the Account.

“The Quakers (says Crosby) exhibited a new complaint, in which they desired a rehearing of the whole matter, which at last was granted them. Wherein they behaved themselves so disorderly, as displeased the whole auditory; and finding themselves not able to get the better of the Baptists, being dissappointed of the success they hoped for, appointed a meeting at their own house in Wheeler-Street; thither Mr. Hicks would not go, because they who had *appealed* were no fit judges to *condemn* in that case wherein they had *appealed*; but sent Mr. Ives thither with some others, who so managed the Quakers, that they were obliged to *break up*, without any further proceedings in the matter.

“Thomas Ellwood tells us, that he let fly a broad-side at the Baptists, in a single sheet of paper, under the title of a *fresh pursuit*. In which (says he) having restated the controversy between them and us, and reinforced our charge of forgery, &c. against Thomas Hicks and his abettors; I offered a fair challenge to them, not only to Thomas Hicks himself, but to all those his compurgators, who had before undertaken to acquit him from our charge, together with their companion Jeremiah Ives, to give me a fair and public meeting, in which I would make good our charge against him as *principal* and all the rest of them as accessaries; but nothing could provoke them to come fairly forth.”

The Baptists published an account of the two last meetings between them and the Quakers, together with the occasions of them, as also the letters which passed in order thereunto. This was entitled *A Contest for Christianity*, with some reflections upon several passages that were published in the account which the Quakers gave of the said meetings. “This is submitted (says Crosby) to the judgment of all judicious and impartial men, and is too long to be in-

Mr. Delaune replies to Dr. Calamy.

served. It is thought probable that this was written by Mr. Daniel Dyke.*

In the year 1683, very violent measures were adopted towards all denominations of dissenters, and several eminent Baptists became great sufferers. The information we possess respecting them will be found highly interesting. The first we mention is the famous Mr. Thomas Delaune, the champion of Nonconformity, on account of which he suffered great hardships in prison, where he died. The occasion of his sufferings was briefly as follows.—Dr. Benjamin Calamy, rector of St. Lawrence Jewry, in one of his printed sermons entitled *A scrupulous Conscience*, invited the nonconformists to examine what each party had to say for themselves with respect to the ceremonies imposed by the church and enforced by the penal laws, and called upon them modestly to propose their doubts, and meekly to hearken to and receive instructions. In compliance with this, Mr. Delaune, who was a Baptist and a learned man, printed a *Plea for the Nonconformists*, shewing the true state of their case, and justifying their separation. But before it was published, he was apprehended by a messenger of the press, and shut up a close prisoner in Newgate by warrant from the Recorder Jenner, dated November 30, 1683.

During his confinement, Mr. Delaune published a narrative of his trial and sufferings, which was addressed to Doctor Calamy. In the title page we find the following scriptures, which show the state of his mind under his sufferings. *Am I therefore become your enemy because I tell you the truth?—If thou seest the oppression of the poor, and violent perverting of judgment and justice in a province, marvel not at the matter, for He that is higher than the highest regardeth.—If you suffer*

* Crosby, vol. ii. p 294—310

He is apprehended.

for righteousness' sake, happy are ye ; and be not afraid of their terror, neither be ye troubled. Gal. iv. xvi. Eccles. v. viii.

1. Peter iii. ivx.

He informed Dr. Calamy, that when he was apprehended, he was sent by Jenner the recorder to Wood-Street Compter ; “ where (says he) I had most wretched accommodation. I was turned in among the common-side prisoners, where a hard bench was my bed, and two bricks my pillows ; and I was not suffered to see some of my acquaintance who were prisoners there as dissenters. I was soon after sent to Newgate, and lodged among felons, whose horrid company made a perfect representation of that place which you describe when you mention hell. But after two days and nights, without any refreshment, the unusualness of that society and place has impaired my health, the constitution of which at best is very tender and crazy, I was removed and am now in the press yard, a place of some sobriety, though still a prison.”

While here, on December 8, he addressed a letter to Dr. Calamy, which he sent by the hands of his wife, representing how much he should suffer for attending to his request, and that the doctor was in honour bound to procure his sheets yet unfinished a public passport, and to him his liberty ; “ Else (says he) I must conclude it unfair, and that if the irresistible logic of gaol grow alamode, it will make the reformation some pretend to suspected to be very little meritorious of that name. Sir, I entreat you to excuse this trouble from a stranger, who would fain be convinced by something more like divinity than Newgate, where any message from you shall be welcome to your humble servant, Thomas Delaune.”

To this the doctor replied, that if he had been imprisoned on account of answering his book, he would do him any kindness which became him : but this he never attempted,

His Indictment.

excusing himself as being no way concerned, for that the sheets he saw at the printer's did not mention his name. This led him to write as follows. "I appeal to your conscience whether I had not some reason to expect some return to these applications? But I had none to any purpose, and that too but in a few words to my wife. I had some thoughts that you would have performed the office of a divine in visiting me in my place of confinement; either to argue me out of my doubts, which your promised SCRIPTURE and REASON, not a *mittimus* and *Newgate*, could easily do. To the former I *can* yield—to the latter, it seems, I *must*. This is a severe kind of logic, and will probably dispute me out of the world, as it did Mr. Bampfield and Mr. Ralphson lately, who were my dear and excellent companions in trouble, and whose absence I cannot but bemoan, as having lost in them a society that was truly pious, truly sweet, and truly amiable. But I hope the God of mercy will supply the want by a more immediate influence of comfort than what can be obtained at second hand."

He proceeds to give an account of his trial by saying, "On the tenth of December two bills were found against Mr. Ralphson and me by the grand jury of London, and on the thirtieth of the same month we were called to the sessions house in the Old Baily. Our indictments were then read in English, to which we pleaded not guilty. We desired copies of the said indictments, and time to make our defence till the next sessions, which the court after some pause granted. The substance of the indictment against me was as follows. "The jurors for our lord the king, upon their oath present that Thomas Delaune late of London, gentleman, not regarding his due allegiance, but contriving and intending to disquiet and disturb the peace and common

Indictment.

tranquility of this kingdom, to bring the said lord the king into the greatest hate and contempt of his subjects; machining and further intending to move stir up and procure sedition and rebellion, and to disparage and scandalize the book of common prayer, &c.

“ On the 30th of November, in the 35th year of the king, at London, in the parish of St. Botolph without Bishopgate, in the ward of Bishopsgate aforesaid; by force and arms, unlawfully, seditiously, and maliciously did write, print, and publish, and caused to be written, printed, and published, a certain false seditious and scandalous libel of and concerning the said lord the king and the book of common prayer aforesaid, entitled *A Plea for the Nonconformists*.

“ In which said libel are contained these false fictions and scandalous sentences following; viz. The church of Rome and England who are great transgressors to presume to vary from Christ's precept in altering or adding to the form of words expressed by Christ in the eleventh of Luke; for so they have done. They say, forgive us our trespasses as we forgive them who trespass against us, when there are no such words in Christ's prayer: his words are, forgive us our sins or debts, for we also forgive every one that is indebted to us. And, says the indictment, in another part of the said libel are contained these false fictions, seditious and scandalous sentences following; viz. And may we not say that in these following particulars we do symbolize with idolatrous Rome herein? First, by enjoining and imposing this (here the indictment makes an imundo, meaning the book of common prayer) as a set form, as they do with penalties, contrary to the scriptures. Secondly, by an often repetition of the same form in the same exercise three or four times at least, insomuch that in cathedral churches it is said or sung

Brought to Trial.

ten or twelve times a day, contrary to Christ's express words, that when we pray, we do not make vain repetitions as the heathens do, for they think they shall be heard for their much speaking. Thirdly by enjoining the whole congregation, men and women, to repeat the same after the priest, though no such directions by Christ: nay, he forbids women to pray or prophecy in the church. Fourthly, in singing this prayer in the cathedrals by responses of people without the least warrant from Christ for such song-praying. [Then the indictment ends with a fearful aggravation, that is] in contempt of the king, and to the evil and most pernicious example of all such other delinquents in the like case, and against the peace of the said lord now king, his crown and dignity &c.

Signed,

WAGSTAFFE.

“On the 16th of January (continues Mr. Delaune) we were called to the sessions-house; but there being some trials which proved very tedious, we were not brought on. The next day we were called to the outer bar, after the attendance of several hours in a place not very lovely, and in the sharpest winter you have known, which it is very likely carried my two friends beyond the jurisdiction of sessions, bale-docks, or press-yards, to a glorious mansion of rest.

“I desired that my indictment should be read in Latin, which was done. Here the gentlemen of the law aggravated things with their usual rhetoric. One of them, I think the attorney general, was pleased to say that the prisoner who stood there before (Mr. Ralphson was tried before me) did labour to undermine the state, and that man (meaning me) would undermine the church: so that to incense the jury against us, he said, Here is *church* and *state* struck at. This, Sir, was improbable to be true, for it is wonderful that any

His Defence.

church and state so potent as this is should fear such underminers as the extravagant harangue termed us. For my part, I cannot be righteously charged with any attempt against either, unless my obedience to you be so: and then if I be guilty, you that tempted me to it can never prove yourself innocent.

“ Being desired to speak what I had to say for myself, I spoke the following words, which one who knew me took in short-hand, though without my knowledge.

“ My Lord, last sessions I pleaded not guilty; that is, not guilty modo et forma; for I designed not vi et armis, to raise rebellion, sedition &c. I detest such things: he that swears in that respect against me must be perjured. The instances in the indictment relate no such thing. My Lord, I pray you to trouble no witnesses about me: I will not prevaricate. I have written some papers entitled, A Plea for the Nonconformists, not instigated by the feigned formalities in the indictment; but it was at the loud challenge of Dr. Calamy, one of the king's chaplains; in his discourse upon scrupulous consciences, dedicated to your lordship; wherein he called upon doubting persons to examine what could be said on both sides, which I did. Now since public challenges are made to be answered, to punish me for obeying a guide of the church is hard, very hard.

“ I desire that the entire paragraphs may be read, from which the crimes charged against me are inferred. If fragments only be produced, from which no perfect sense can be deduced, I shall be unfairly dealt with. The coherence of sense in a continued discourse, not scraps and broken pieces of sentences, can demonstrate the scope of an argument. If what I have written be true, it is no crime, unless truth be made a crime. If false, let Dr. Calamy or any of the

His Sentence.

guides of your church confute me (as he promised in his sermon aforesaid) by good scripture and good reason: then will I submit. If the latter method be not taken, I must repeat it, 'tis very hard, my lord, 'tis very hard.

“ Here the chief justice interrupted me, addressing himself to the jury, and expounded that part of the sentence I excepted against, saying, It was only for form sake, and that any breach of the peace in the sense of the law may be said to be *vi et armis*, by force and arms, with some other expressions to the same purpose: the latter of which I acknowledged. He then said, after a torrent of aggravation, Gentlemen, if you believe that man (pointing at me, and alluding to what I had confessed in writing the Nonconformist's Plea) you must find him guilty of the whole indictment. And they readily did it accordingly.

“ The next day I received my sentence, the very same with Mr. Ralphson's. “ Thomas Delaune fined a hundred marks, and to be kept prisoner &c., and to find good security for his good behaviour for one whole year afterwards; and that the said books and seditious libels by him published shall be burnt with fire before the Royal Exchange, London. And if he be discharged to pay six shillings.

Signed,

WAGSTAFFE.”

“ The Recorder then asked me some questions, viz. whether I was in orders? I told him, I was never in any ecclesiastical orders, nor ever preached among any people; that I was bred a scholar, and had been a schoolmaster, and kept a grammar school till forced from it by the present prosecutions &c.

“ The court told both Mr. Ralphson and me, that in respect to our education as scholars we should not be pilloried,

His Sufferings.

though we deserved it. We were sent back to our place of confinement, and the next execution day our books were burnt, as the sentence ordered it, in the place aforesaid, and we continue here. But since I wrote this, Mr. Ralphson has had his supersedeas by death to a better place.

“ Thus, Sir, you have a series of my circumstances. I will make no complaints of the usage I had when forced as aforesaid to lodge among the rabble of wretches, whose society seemed to me to be a hell upon earth, as before; nor of my other hardships, as confinement, loss of employment, loss of health, &c. But if you have any sense of humanity, you will recollect yourself, and procure me my freedom, being not able to pay my fine, lost by obedience to your public call.”

When it is known that Mr. Delaune's judge was the infamous Sir George Jeffries, it will not appear at all surprising that he should have been treated with such unjust severity: but it is really almost incredible that Dr. Calamy could read this address, and not be moved either by a sense of honour or humanity to procure his release.

The remaining part of this tragical story shall be related from the preface to the seventeenth edition of his work, written by the celebrated De Foe.

“ Mr. Delaune continued in confinement in Newgate about fifteen months, and suffered great hardships by extreme poverty, being so entirely reduced by this disaster that he had no subsistence but what was contributed by such friends as came to visit him. His behaviour in this distress was like the greatness of mind which he discovered at his trial. And the same spirit which appears in his writings appeared in his conversation, and supported him with invincible patience under the greatest extremities. But long con-

His Death.

finement and distresses of various kinds conquered him at last. He had a wife and two small children all with him in the prison, for they had no subsistence elsewhere. The closeness and inconvenience of the place first affected them; and all *three*, by lingering sorrows and sickness, died in the prison! At last, worn out with troubles and hopeless of relief, and too much abandoned by those who should have taken some other care of him, this excellent person sunk under the burden, and died there also. I cannot refrain saying (adds De Foe) that such a champion of such a cause deserved better usage. And it was very hard that such a man, such a Christian, such a scholar, and on such an occasion, should starve in a dungeon; and that the whole body of dissenters in England, whose cause he died for defending, should not raise him the sum of *sixty-six pounds thirteen shillings and four-pence* to save his life!"

De Foe's opinion of the *Plea for Nonconformists* is thus expressed. "This book is perfect of itself. Never author left behind him a more finished piece, and I believe the dispute is entirely ended. If any man ask what we can say why the dissenters differ from the church of England, and what they can plead for it; I can recommend no better reply than this. Let them answer, in short, Thomas Delaune, and desire the querist to read the book."

He adds, "The treatment which the reverend and learned author of this book met with will for ever stand as a monument of the cruelty of those times. They who affirm that the dissenters were never persecuted in England for their religion will do well to tell us what name we shall give to this man of merit, than whom few greater scholars, clearer heads, or greater masters of argument ever graced the English nation. I am sorry to say, he is one of near *eight thousand*

Account of Mr. Delaune.

protestant dissenters who perished in prison in the days of that merciful prince King Charles ii., and that merely for dissenting from the church, in points which they could give such reasons for as this Plea assigns; and for no other cause were stifled, I had almost said, murdered in gaols for their religion, in the days of those gentlemen's power who pretend to abhor persecution."

Mr. Delaune was born at Brini in Ireland, about three miles from Riggsdale. His parents were papists, and very poor. They rented part of the estate of 'Squire Riggs. This gentleman, observing the forward parts of young Delaune, placed him in a friary at Kilcrash, about seven miles from Cork, where he received his education. When he was about sixteen years of age, he left the friary, and went to Kingsale, where he met with Mr. Bampfield, who then had a pilchard fishery at that place. Finding Mr. Delaune a young man of good capacity and learning, he took him into his employment as a clerk, and was made the happy instrument of his conversion. He continued some years in great esteem and intimacy with Major Riggs and Mr. Bampfield, till he was forced by persecution to leave Ireland, and come to England. In Ireland he became acquainted with Mr. Edward Hutchinson, who was pastor of a congregation at Ormond, and at length married his daughter Hannah, with whom he came to London.

We find his name affixed with those of our London ministers of the Baptist denomination, to the reply to the appeal of Mr. Obed Wills, which he had made to them in reference to Mr. Danvers. He also wrote a preface to the work of Mr. Hutchinson on the covenants, and a Latin epistle in verse, prefixed to the same work in 1674. He was also very intimate with Mr. Benjamin Keach, and compiled the

Death of Mr. Ralphson.

Philologia Sacra, prefixed to his work on Scripture Metaphors.

In the course of this statement the names of Mr. Ralphson and Mr. Bampfield have been mentioned. The former of these, who was tried with Mr. Delaune, was a person of considerable learning and usefulness. Possessed of great courage, he would not desist from preaching in London, though several of his friends were committed to prison, among whom were Mr. Laurence Wise, Mr. Griffiths, and Mr. Bampfield. Sometimes he held his meetings at Founders Hall, and at others at Dyers Hall. He was at length taken and sent to Newgate, where he died at about the age of fifty-eight. As we shall have occasion to speak of him in another place, we defer any farther account of him here.

Mr. Edward Bampfield was the pastor of a seventh-day Baptist church which met at Pinners Hall in Broad-Street; but as this place was very public, he did not long escape the notice and the rage of his persecutors. On February 17, 1682, when they were assembled in the forenoon at their usual hour, Mr. Bampfield being in the pulpit, a constable with his staff and several men with halberts rushed into the meeting. The constable commanded him in the king's name to come down: to which he answered that he was in the discharge of his office in the name of the King of kings. I have, said the constable, a warrant from the lord mayor to disturb your meeting. I have a warrant from Jesus Christ, who is Lord Maximus, to go on, said Mr. Bampfield, and accordingly proceeded in his discourse. The constable then commanded one of the officers to pull him down. Upon which Mr. Bampfield repeated his text: the latter part of which was, *The day of vengeance is in his heart, and the year of his redeemed is come.* He added, *He will pull down his enemies.*

Mr. Bampffield apprehended.

They seized Mr. Bampffield and six of his people, and took them before the lord mayor. After examination by his lordship, they were fined ten pounds each, and desired to depart.

In the afternoon of the same day they went to their meeting-house again at the usual time. No sooner had Mr. Bampffield and a few of his friends entered the place than the officers came and shut the door to prevent those from entering who were coming in, and required those who were there immediately to disperse. Instead of attending to the mandate, they kept their places, and took this opportunity to tell the officers of the sin and disgrace of persecuting men on account of religion. They were all apparently affected with this address, and declared their unwillingness to engage in such a work, but said they were obliged to do it.

One of the people then demanded of the constable to produce his warrant for what he did ; but he acknowledged that he had none, saying he would send to the lord mayor for one. Without any warrant, however, the constable commanded one of the officers to pull Mr. Bampffield down from the pulpit. After some time, with a pale face and trembling limbs, he took hold of him, and led him out into the street, where a great number of people were collected together. The constable fearing to proceed farther, Mr. Bampffield went with a large company to his own house, and performed worship, having been prevented from doing so in the meeting-house.

On the 24th of the same month they met again at Pinnars Hall, but had not been long assembled before another constable and several officers rushed in upon them. Mr. Bampffield was engaged in prayer, which he did not discontinue till one of the officers came and pulled him away. As he was going through the streets towards the lord mayor's, he carried his

His Sentence.

bible in his hand, exposing it to the view of the people, who collected in great numbers; thus endeavouring to show that it was for the sake of Christ and his word that his liberty was taken away. The spectators as he passed were differently affected towards him. Some said he was a Christian jew: others said, See how he walks with his bible in his hand, like one of the old martyrs!

Being brought to the sessions, after examination, he and three more were sent to Newgate; and on March 17, 1683, he was brought to the bar with some others who had been committed for not taking the oath of allegiance and supremacy, when they were found guilty by the jury who were directed to do so by the judge. March 28, they were again brought to the bar to receive sentence. The Recorder without asking whether they would take the oaths, or whether they had any thing to say in their own defence, after casting many reflections on scrupulous consciences, read the following sentence: That they were out of the protection of the king's majesty; that all their goods and chattels were forfeited; and that they were to remain in gaol during their lives, or during the king's pleasure.

Mr. Bampfield would have spoken in reply; but there was a great uproar, crying, Away with them! Put them away from the bar: we will not hear them! While they were thrusting them away, Mr. Bampfield said, The righteous Lord loveth righteousness: the Lord be judge in this case! They were then returned to Newgate. The hardships which Mr. Bampfield endured soon brought him to his end. At his last trial he was kept ten hours in the bail-dock, a cold and disagreeable place. But he soon received his discharge; death performing that kind office for him in Newgate, to the great grief of his fellow-prisoners and a very numerous acquaintance.*

* Crosby, vol. ii. p. 355—361.

Mr. Griffith's Trial.

Mr. Griffiths, a Baptist minister in London, was interrupted at his meeting-house several times, and on February 27, 1683, was sent to Newgate. The account of his trial was published by himself while in prison, and contains some important information respecting the restrictions they wished to lay upon them. It is as follows:—

“The case of Mr. John Griffiths, minister of the gospel, and now prisoner in Newgate: being a true and impartial account of what he spake at the sessions house in the Old Bailey, on April 18, 1683, before the Lord Chief Justice Saunders and three other judges, the Lord Mayor, Recorder, and several Aldermen of the city of London.

“On the day and year aforesaid, about four in the afternoon, Mr. Bampfield and myself were sent for by the court; and soon after we came, were first brought to the inward bar. Mr. Bampfield was first required to take the oath of allegiance, it being again tendered him according to the statute in the third of King James. After some discourse between the judges and the Recorder had with Mr. Bampfield, he refusing to swear, they made an end at that time with him. The clerk of the peace, said to me, Take off your glove. I asked him, What to do? He answered, To lay your hand on the book, which he had in his hand, and held out to me. I then spake with a loud voice and said, My lord, I hope you will give me the liberty to speak for myself in my own defence. One of the judges replied that my friend, meaning Mr. Bampfield, had spoken for me, or to that effect. I said again that I desired to speak for myself, for I had other reasons to offer why I could not take that oath. Having liberty granted, as I took it from their silence, I with an audible voice said to them, I am commanded in the scripture when I take an oath to swear in truth and judg-

Objections to the oath of allegiance.

ment, and in righteousness, unto which the church of England doth agree. It is one article of their faith, (the 39th) that he who taketh an oath, being required of the magistrate, ought to swear, so that he do it in truth, in righteousness, and in judgment. Now for me to swear as my duty is according to the scripture, and as the church of England directs, I cannot, were I to take this oath; because I cannot know, but must be ignorant of, what I bind my soul to perform; and then it is impossible I should swear in truth, in judgment and in righteousness. I cannot know, but must be ignorant, both of what hereafter by law I may be required to do, and also to whom I swear to be obedient; for it is not possible I should foresee what laws may hereafter be made. I do not only bind my soul to obey the king that now is, but his heirs and successors also; and I know not what his successor may be. For aught I know he may be a popish successor, a papist; and I cannot swear to obey laws not yet in being, nor to be obedient to a popish successor: therefore I cannot take the oath of allegiance.

“ Upon these words there was a hum in the court, which being ceased, after a little pause, one of the judges made this short reply. Aye, saith he, doth he stick it there? I then went on and said, I cannot conform to the church of England. Should I take this oath, I swear to conform; for I am bound by my oath to obey all the king's laws, as much those laws which respect the worship of God as those relating to civil government; and then I am sworn to hear common prayer once a month. Here one of the judges said, ‘So you are.’—And to receive the sacrament with the church of England as often as the law requires; yea, and to conform to all the rites and ceremonies of the church. To this it was answered, ‘So you are.’—And not to frequent private

Sufferings of John Griffiths.

meetings any more; for there are laws that forbid it. It was answered again, 'So you are.'—Therefore I cannot take this oath.

"I then prayed all the judges to give me their opinions, whether it were as I had said or not. They answered with one consent that it was as I had said, viz. that in taking the oath I did swear to obey all the king's laws without exception. Then I returned them thanks that they were pleased to give me their opinion and judgment in the case. And withal added these words: I am well satisfied and settled in my religion, and the more confirmed by what you have said; and if it be so, do with me what you please. Come life, come death, the Lord assisting me, I will never take the oath of allegiance.

"Then I desired to speak a few words more, and said, Be it known unto you that I do not refuse to take the oath of allegiance in any dislike I have of any thing contained therein against the authority of the pope or the see of Rome, but do in all points therein with you agree. And further, I do declare that I do believe the pope hath no power, nor authority over the king's person or government; no, nor over the meanest subject in his kingdom. And I do yet further declare, that I believe in my conscience, popery to be idolatrous, damnable, and devilish.

"I was then had back again to the press-yard, where I remain the Lord's prisoner; and am ready further to bear my testimony for him, against antichrist, the pope, and see of Rome; and for his holy word, the purity of the gospel, and the ordinances thereof, against popish darkness, filthy idolatries, fornications, blasphemies, and abominations, and all traditions of men; as one made willing through the free mercy and rich grace of God, my heavenly Father, to for-

Sufferings of Hansard Knollys.

sake all for Christ, who hath loved me and given himself for me; not counting my life dear to myself, so that I might finish my course with joy, and the ministry I have received of the Lord Jesus, to testify the gospel of the grace of God.

“Thus have I given an account of what I spake, and what was said to me, to the very best of my memory, though it may not be word for word: yet for the substance of what was spoken, it is true.

JOHN GRIFFITHS.”

We are not informed how Mr. Griffith's imprisonment terminated, but it is probable that he was treated with severity, as it was his third offence, and it was fully expected when he was committed that the sentence of the law, which was banishment, would be inflicted.

Several other Baptist ministers suffered at this time. The venerable Hansard Knollys, now eighty-four years of age, had been in October 1684 about six or eight months in the new prison. It was credibly reported that a little time before he was imprisoned, a lord came to him from the court, and asked him whether he and his friends of his persuasion would accept of a toleration gladly. The excellent man replied, “I am old, and know but few men's minds.” Being further pressed for an answer, he said, “I am of opinion that no liberty but what came by act of parliament would be very acceptable, because that would be stable, firm, and certain.” To such artful conduct did the court descend in order to make the dissenters wish for a toleration which would include the papists. It ought to be recorded to the honour of this apostolic man, that he preferred a prison to any concession that would affect the interest of the church of Christ.*

* M. S. penes me.

Sufferings of Andrew Gifford

Mr. Andrew Gifford before mentioned, being very zealous in his Master's work, met with much interruption at this period, as his enemies gladly embraced the opportunity of showing their envy and rage against him. To avoid their fury, he frequently preached in the forest of Kingswood, about three miles from Bristol, the place where the celebrated Whitfield and Wesley have since preached with so much success. The county magistrates hearing of it, were filled with great indignation; but a good providence preserved him from falling into their hands till the latter end of November 1680, when he was taken by a warrant signed by no less than thirteen of them, and sent to jail. He had been before imprisoned, but never for so long a period. There were many circumstances relating to this event which made it remarkable. His son Emanuel was placed as a watch to give notice of the approach of the informers: but in consequence of his being frozen to the ground on which he had sat down a few minutes to rest himself, and not being able to get free without cutting off the skirts of his new frieze coat, he was prevented from giving the alarm soon enough for his father to escape. A worthy Independant minister whose name is not preserved, was preaching at the same time in a neighbouring part of the wood; but in attempting to pass the rider to escape the informers he lost his life. The colliers hearing that Mr. Gifford was taken, collected in great numbers and came to him armed with bills and clubs and other rural weapons, and offered to rescue him out of their hands. But he refused, saying, That though he thought he might justly do all he could to prevent being seized, yet being now actually taken, and that by legal authority, he chose to submit to the law of the land, and leave his cause with God, who he doubted not would order all things for the best.

in Gloucester Castle.

He was no sooner brought before one of the justices than his mittimus was made ; but on representing that he had some affairs of importance to settle, and that his wife was far advanced in pregnancy, the justice dismissed him upon his parole of honour for two or three days, on Mr Giffords promising that he would surrender himself at the time appointed. He no sooner however arrived at home than the harpies came and seized him, and hurried him away to Gloucester castle, which was thirty miles distant, without any regard to the clemency of the magistrate, or inclemency of the season. He entered the gaol just as the chimes rung at midnight. This circumstance is mentioned because it was afterwards remarkably overruled for good. While he was in prison, he with several other ministers performed worship with the prisoners, and a great reformation was wrought especially among the felons. In the meantime his enemies, to prevent him preaching any more in public, procured an order from court, by means of the Duke of York, afterwards King James II. to confine him there for life ; but the Lord rendered all their designs abortive, and taught them that wherein they dealt proudly he was above them, and could take the wise in their own craftiness. When the six months mentioned in the mittimus had expired, Mr. Gifford desired the keeper to dismiss him, who answered, that it was not usual to open the gates at midnight. He replied, that they were opened to let him in, and therefore why should they not be to let him out ? Seconding his demand with a more powerful argument, being apprized of his enemies' design, he was discharged at the same hour as when he came in, namely, at twelve o'clock at night. The next morning at six o'clock the express arrived from London with an order to confine him during life. Thus his being hurried to prison before his parole had expired was probably the occasion of his being dis-

Letter of Mr. Gifford.

missed before the order came. This was his last imprisonment, as he ever after kept out of the way of his enemies, or at least was protected by the care of his divine Master whom he constantly and faithfully served.

While Mr. Gifford was in prison he sent the following letter, now in the possession of Mr. Whittuck of Bristol, and published in the Protestant Dissenters Magazine. This was addressed to Mr. Edward Grant of Trowbridge, and is dated Gloucester Castle, April 14, 1684.

“ Dear Friend,

“ MY dear love to you and your wife, with many and hearty thanks to God and you for the exceeding great love, both in provoking others to such liberality, and taking so great a journey to visit, and bestowing so great a benefit on me which I can never requite; but my prayer is, and shall be, that it may be trebled to you again, and that divine blessings may descend on you and yours, and that you may never want any mercy either for time or eternity; but may have that grace, which may keep you faithful to what you know, and enable you to do what God does require, and contentedly and cheerfully endure whatever in so doing you may suffer; your peace of conscience, the welfare of your immortal soul, the pleasure and honour of God, is to be preferred before goods, liberty, or life itself; therefore with purpose of heart let us cleave to the Lord, then are we secure for our spiritual and eternal welfare; O love God more than creatures, fear him more than men, and sin more than sufferings; do not buy your peace with soul-wounding defilements, be faithful unto death, and then you shall have that crown of life which will make amends for all, and then I am sure you will never repent neither service nor suffering; and though you may fear how you shall be able to stand, yet

Continued.

consider God is able to make you stand, his grace is sufficient, his strength is made perfect in the creature's weakness; cry to, and rely upon him; use all honest means to preserve yourself, and to prevent your enemies; use the wisdom of the serpent, but be sure to keep the innocency of the dove.— Seek and depend alone on God, in God's wisdom to council, power and strength to defend, or support and supply all our wants of nature and grace, and in due time give a glorious deliverance; "it is good both to hope and quietly wait for his salvation;" be sure you do not comply with any thing you are not satisfied is God's will, or you should be loth to hear of in that great day. I had rather if God is pleased to help me, abide in bonds, and in the worst that can be done by my enemies, than do the least evil for deliverance. Pray for me, as I for you; so committing you to him who is able to keep you from falling, and present you faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy, I rest your loving friend under manifold obligations.

ANDREW GIFFORD.

"Pray take care to deliver the inclosed letter, you may read it to the congregation, by which you will understand what was done at sessions. Remember my love to brother Cray with thanks for his kindness."*

We must now return to the year 1675, when many professions were made in the House of Lords of respect for the protestant dissenters, and the duke of Buckingham proposed to bring in a *bill of indulgence*. Though this was doubtless a pretext to encourage popery, yet it is probable the Baptists were willing to take the opportunity it afforded them of devising means to promote the interest of the denomination. In proof of this we

* Protestant Dissent. Mag. vol. i. p. 498.

Baptist Ministers assemble.

find that the London ministers addressed a circular letter to the churches both in England and Wales, inviting their brethren of the Baptist persuasion to meet the following May in the metropolis with a view to form a plan for the providing an orderly standing ministry in the church, who might give themselves to reading and study, and so become able ministers of the new testament. The letter bore date the 2d of the 8th month 1675, and was signed by most of the London pastors, among whom were Daniel Dyke, William Collins, and William Kiffin.

We know not what was the result of this proposal, but it is probable the severity of persecution against the Non-conformists prevented their meeting. It however proves that the learned men who were amongst the Baptists, and pastors of their churches were very desirous of providing a learned ministry, which could not now be expected without establishing seminaries of their own, as the universities and public schools were shut against them.

At the close of this year we find there were some disputes amongst the Baptist ministers in the west of England respecting the *obligations of unconverted men to pray*. Mr. Andrew Gifford, the pastor of the church at Pithay, Bristol, seems to have been acquainted with some ministers who were of the opinion that as none could pray acceptably without the influences of the Holy Spirit, and unconverted men being destitute of those influences, that therefore it was not their duty to pray, nor the duty of ministers to exhort them to seek for spiritual blessings. This excellent man, who was of a different sentiment, being very fond of the free invitations of the gospel to sinners, as appears by the sermon preached at his funeral, and wishing to obtain information on this subject, and some other points debated between

Letter to Mr. Gifford.

them, addressed a letter to Mr. Joseph Morton, a baptist minister in London, requesting, it should seem, that he would submit it to the rest of the ministers, and obtain their opinion on the subject. The letter addressed to him on this occasion is so clear and satisfactory, and so descriptive of the sentiments of many of our ministers, that we with great pleasure give it a place in our work.

London 18th of the 11th month [Jan. 18.] 1675.

“ Dear brother Gifford,

“ WE had a sight of your letter to brother Morton, and are not a little grieved to hear of those differences among you, and the more that they should be on such grounds as you mention, which can have no other tendency than to render us contemptible to all serious and judicious persons.

“ Prayer is a part of that homage which every man is obliged to give to God; 'tis a duty belonging to natural, and not only to instituted religion, which is fully intimated in Acts xvii. 26, 27. Whatever in that text is meant by seeking, prayer cannot (by any just reason) be excluded, and if prayer be intended, 'tis comprehensive of all mankind. It cannot be supposed that man being such a creature as he is should not be obliged to love, fear, and obey God. 'Tis so far from us to esteem them the most zealous Christians, that we account them scarce worthy to be reckoned amongst the number of mankind, that will not acknowledge worship due to the common Author of their beings; for he that denies this, must at once deny a deity, and himself to be a man.

“ If hereunto it be objected, that such persons have not the Spirit, therefore ought not to pray; this objection is not cogent, forasmuch as neither the want of the Spirit's immedi-

Letter continued.

ate motions to, or its assistance in the duty, doth not take off the obligation to the duty. If it would, then also from every other duty; and consequently all religion be cashiered. If the obligations to this and other duties were suspended merely for want of such motions and assistance, then unconverted persons are so far from sinning in the omission of such duties, that it is their duty to omit them. 'Tis certain no man can, without the assistance of the Holy Spirit, either repent or believe; yet it will not therefore follow, that impenitency and unbelief are no sins; if these be sins, then the contrary must be their duty. It cannot be their sin to cry to God for the assistance of his Spirit to enable them thereunto. If a duty be no duty to us, except we be immediately moved to it; then whether sin doth not cease to be a sin, if the Spirit do not immediately hinder us from it; and thus by the same reason we may omit a duty, we may likewise commit a sin; and hereby that great rule of duty God hath given unto men to walk by, is wholly made void, or at least allowed to be but a rule only at some certain times, *viz.* when the Spirit immediately moves us to the observance of it; till then it hath no authority to oblige us: and so every man is sinless, whatever sin be committed, or whatever duty be neglected, if the Spirit do not immediately hinder us from the one and move us to the other.

“ Moreover the design of the objection doth as effectually discourage such as are under doubts and desertions, from this duty, as any other person; and thus it would be as that great enemy to the souls of men would have it, namely, that there should be but very few in the world to acknowledge God in this solemn part of his worship: whereas all men are obliged to acknowledge him as the fountain of all goodness; and themselves to be dependant creatures on him, and therefore

Letter continued.

to supplicate him for those blessings whereof they stand in need: or otherwise it must follow, that they have no wants, and are not dependant on him, but are all-sufficient: or if they be under the sense of wants, and of their dependance upon the supreme goodness, yet they must not (at least in the way of prayer) acknowledge those wants, and that dependance, by seeking unto God for the bettering their conditions: but they be obliged hereunto, not only from those innate notions they have of God in their minds, but by the express revelations of the Divine will in the holy scriptures. Christianity improves and rectifies, but it doth not abolish our reason; it helps to better mediums and motives to perform our service to God, but it doth not in any wise make void that which was a duty before.

“ If yet it be objected, that an unregenerated person fails in the due manner of the performance of this duty, therefore he ought not to pray; nor to be joined with in prayer; We answer—the defect in the manner (though a sin) doth not discharge the person from the obligation; for still it is his duty to pray: 'tis true there are such directions given in the holy scriptures as to the right performance of this duty, which the mere light of nature could not give; yet the duty itself of invoking God is so agreeable to the universal reason and sentiments of mankind, that there is nothing spoken of this in the scriptures but what doth suppose it previously to be a duty: therefore, unless we suppose that the law of nature is totally obliterated, we must conclude that mankind are under an obligation to this duty. But if a failure in the manner doth take off this obligation, then every unconverted person is sinless, if he totally neglect this and *every other duty*. Yea, every Christian, when under deadness and distractions is discouraged from this duty; and thus a door would

Assembly of Ministers

be opened to all manner of wickedness and irreligion in the world. Again, as the aforesaid defect doth not discharge the person himself from the duty, neither are we so far concerned therein, as thereby to derive guilt and pollution to ourselves, in case we should join in prayer with such a person; for if it would, then may we not communicate in duty with any person of whose sincerity we are not assured. But where such an assurance is made necessary to our discharge of those duties which jointly are to be performed with others, we know not: much more might have been added, but we consider what herein is said may suffice. This with our earnest desires that the God of all grace would be with you, to establish you in every good word and work, and to make your love to each other abound in all knowledge and judgment, &c.—We subscribe ourselves,

“Your very affectionate bretheren,

“In the fellowship of the Gospel,

“WILLIAM KIFFIN,
HANSARD KNOLLYS,
DANIEL DYKE,
LAURENCE WISE,
HENRY FORTY,
WILLIAM COLLINS,
NEHEMIAH COXE,

JAMES JONES,
THOMAS HICKS,
JOSEPH MORTON,
JAMES HYCRIGG,
ROBERT SNELLING,
THOMAS HOPGOOD.”

In the year 1677, there was an assembly of the pastors and elders of the Baptist churches both in London and the country. It is probable they met in London in consequence of the letter which was sent in October 1675, requesting them to meet the next year to take into consideration a plan to provide a standing orderly ministry in the church, &c.

publish a Confession of Faith.

We have no account of what they did in respect to a *learned ministry*, but they agreed to set forth a *Confession of Faith* said to be done *by the Elders and Bretheren of many congregations of Christians (baptized upon profession of their faith) in London and the country*. The motto is “With the heart man believeth unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.” Rom. x. 10. “Search the scriptures.” John v. 39. Printed in the year, 1677.

There are no names to this confession, but it is the same precisely as was afterwards recommended by the general assembly in 1689, when they could meet without fear, and publish the minutes of their proceedings, with their names affixed to their resolutions. There is an address *to the judicious and impartial reader*, which we think worth transcribing. This is as follows :—

“Courteous Reader,

“IT is now many years since divers of us (with other sober Christians then living and walking in the way of the Lord that we profess) did conceive ourselves to be under a necessity of publishing a *confession of our faith*, for the information and satisfaction of those that did not thoroughly understand what our principles were, or had entertained prejudices against our profession, by means of the strange representation of them, by some men of note, who had taken very wrong measures, and accordingly led others into misapprehensions, of us and them : and this was first put forth about the year 1643, in the name of seven congregations then gathered in London ; since which time, divers impressions thereof have been dispersed abroad, and our end proposed in good measure answered, inasmuch as many (and some of those men eminent both for piety and learning) were thereby satisfied, that we were no way guilty of those heterodoxies and

Introductory Address.

fundamental errors, which had too frequently been charged upon us without ground or occasion given on our part. And forasmuch as that confession is not now commonly to be had; and also that many others have since embraced the same truth which is owned therein, it was judged necessary by us to join together in giving a testimony to the world, of our firm adhering to those wholesome principles, by the publication of this which is now in your hand.

“And forasmuch as our method and manner of expressing our sentiments in this, doth vary from the former (although the substance of the matter is the same) we shall freely impart to you the reason and occasion thereof. One thing that greatly prevailed with us to undertake this work, was (not only to give a full account of ourselves to those Christians who differ from us about the subject of Baptism, but also) the profit that might from thence arise unto those that have any account of our labours in their instruction and establishment in the great truths of the gospel; in the clear understanding and steady belief of which, our comfortable walking with God, and fruitfulness before him, in all our ways is most nearly concerned; and therefore we did conclude it necessary to express ourselves the more fully and distinctly; and also to fix on such a method as might be most comprehensive of those things which we designed to explain our sense, and belief of; and finding no defect in this regard, in that fixed on by the assembly, and after them by those of the congregational way, we did readily conclude it best to retain the same order in our present confession: and also when we observed that those last mentioned, did in their confession (for reasons which seemed of weight both to themselves and others) choose not only to express their mind in words concurrent with the former in sense, concerning all those articles

Continued.

wherein they were agreed, but also for the most part without any variation of the terms, we did in like manner conclude it best to follow their example in making use of the very same words with them both, in these articles (which are very many) wherein our faith and doctrine is the same with theirs, and this we did the more abundantly to manifest our consent with both, in all the fundamental articles of the Christian religion, as also with many others, whose orthodox confessions have been published to the world; on the behalf of the protestants in divers nations and cities: and also to convince all that we have no itch to clog religion with new words, but do readily acquiesce in that form of sound words, which hath been in consent with the holy scriptures, used by others before us; hereby declaring before God, angels, and men, our hearty agreement with them, in that wholesome protestant doctrine, which with so clear evidence of scriptures they have asserted: some things indeed, are in some places added, some terms omitted, and some few changed, but these alterations are of that nature as that we need not doubt any charge or suspicion of unsoundness in the faith, from any of our brethren upon the account of them.

“ In those things wherein we differ from others, we have expressed ourselves with all candour and plainness that none might entertain jealousy of ought secretly lodged in our breasts, that we would not the world should be acquainted with; yet we hope we have also observed those rules of modesty and humility, as will render our freedom in this respect inoffensive, even to those whose sentiments are different from ours.

“ We have also taken care to affix texts of scripture in the margin for the confirmation of each article in our confession, in which work we have studiously endeavoured to select such

Continued.

as are most clear and pertinent, for the proof of what is asserted by us : and our earnest desire is, that all into whose hands this may come, would follow that (never enough commended) example of the noble Bereans, who searched the scriptures daily, that they might find out whether the things preached to them were so or not.

“There is one thing more which we sincerely profess, and earnestly desire credence in, viz. That contention is most remote from our design in all that we have done in this matter : and we hope the liberty of an ingenuous unfolding our principles, and opening our hearts unto our brethren, with the scripture grounds on which our faith and practice lean, will by none of them be either denied to us, or taken ill from us. Our whole design is accomplished, if we may obtain that justice, as to be measured in our principles, and practice, and judgment of both by others, according to what we have now published ; which the Lord (whose eyes are as a flame of fire) knoweth to be the doctrine, which with our hearts we must firmly believe and sincerely endeavour to conform our lives to. And oh that other contentions being laid asleep, the only care and contention of all upon whom the name of our blessed Redeemer is called, might for the future be to walk humbly with their God, and in the exercise of love and meekness towards each other, to perfect holiness in the fear of the Lord, each one endeavouring to have his conversation such as becometh the gospel ; and also suitable to his place and capacity, vigorously to promote in others the practice of true religion and undefiled in the sight of God and our Father. And that in this backsliding day, we might not spend our breath in fruitless complaints of the evils of others ; but may every one begin at home, to reform in the first place our own hearts and ways ; and then to quicken all that we may have

Address to the Reader.

influence upon to the same work; that if the will of God were so none might deceive themselves, by resting in and trusting to a form of godliness without the power of it, and inward experience of the efficacy of those truths that are professed by them.

“ And verily there is one spring and cause of the decay of religion in our day, which we cannot but touch upon, and earnestly urge a redress of; and that is the neglect of the worship of God in families, by those to whom the charge and conduct of them is committed. May not the gross ignorance and instability of many, with the profaneness of others, be justly charged upon their parents and masters, who have not trained them up in the way wherein they ought to walk when they were young, but have neglected those frequent and solemn commands which the Lord hath laid upon them so to catechise and instruct them, that their tender years might be seasoned with the knowledge of the truth of God as revealed in the scriptures; and also by their own omission of prayer and other duties of religion in their families, together with the ill example of their loose conversation, have inured them first to a neglect, and then contempt of all piety and religion? We know this will not excuse the blindness or wickedness of any; but certainly it will fall heavy upon those that have thus been the occasion thereof; they indeed die in their sins; but will not their blood be required of those under whose care they were, who yet permitted them to go on without warning, yea led them into the paths of destruction? And will not the diligence of Christians with respect to the discharge of these duties in ages past, rise up in judgment against, and condemn many of those who would be esteemed such now?

“ We shall conclude with our earnest prayer, that the God of all grace will pour out those measures of his Holy Spirit

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upon us, that the profession of truth may be accompanied with the sound belief and diligent practice of it by us: that his name may in all things be glorified, through Jesus Christ our Lord, Amen.”*

To this Confession which is well known, an Appendix is added, from which we make the following extract.—

“Whosoever reads and impartially considers what we have in our foregoing confession declared, may readily perceive that we do not only centre with all other true Christians on the word of God (revealed in the scriptures of truth) as the foundation and rule of our faith and worship; but that we have also industriously endeavoured to manifest, that in the fundamental articles of Christianity we mind the same things, and have therefore expressed our belief in the same words, that have on the like occasion been spoken by other societies of Christians before us.

“This we have done, that those who are desirous to know the principles of religion which we hold and practise, may take an estimate from ourselves (who jointly concur in this work) and may not be misguided, either by undue reports, or by the ignorance or errors of particular persons, who, going under the same name with ourselves, may give an occasion of scandalizing the truth we profess.

“And although we do differ from our brethren who are Pædobaptists in the subject and administration of Baptism, and such other circumstances as have a necessary dependence on our observance of that Ordinance, and do frequent our own assemblies for our mutual edification, and the discharge of those duties and services which we owe unto God, and in his fear to each other; yet we would not be from hence misconstrued, as if the discharge of our own consciences herein

* Confession of Faith of 1677.

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did any way disoblige or alienate our affections or conversation from any others that fear the Lord; but that we may and do as we have opportunity participate of the labours of those, whom God hath indued with abilities above ourselves, and qualified and called to the ministry of the word, earnestly desiring to approve ourselves to be such as follow after peace with holiness: and therefore we always keep that blessed Irenicum, or healing word of the apostle, before our eyes; *If in any thing ye be otherwise minded, God shall reveal even this unto you; nevertheless whereto we have already attained, let us walk by the same rule, let us mind the same thing,* Phil. iii. 15, 16.

“Let it not therefore be judged of us (because much hath been written on this subject, and yet we continue this our practice different from others) that it is out of obstinacy, but rather as the truth is, that we do herein according to the best of our understandings worship God, out of a pure mind yielding obedience to his precept, in that method which we take to be most agreeable to the scriptures of truth, and primitive practice.

“It would not become us to give any such intimation, as should carry a semblance that what we do in the service of God is with a doubting conscience, or with any such temper of mind that we do thus for the present with a reservation that we will do otherwise hereafter upon more mature deliberation; nor have we any cause so to do, being fully persuaded that what we do is agreeable to the will of God. Yet we do heartily propose this, that if any of the servants of our Lord Jesus Christ shall, in the spirit of meekness, attempt to convince us of any mistake either in judgment or practice, we shall diligently ponder his arguments; and account him our chief friend that shall be an instrument to convert us from

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any error that is in our ways, for we cannot wittingly do any thing against the truth, but all things for the truth.

“ And therefore we have endeavoured seriously to consider what hath been already offered for our satisfaction in this point; and are loth to say any more lest we should be esteemed desirous of renewed contests thereabout: yet forasmuch as it may justly be expected that we shew some reason, why we cannot acquiesce in what hath been urged against us, we shall with as much brevity as will consist with plainness, endeavour to satisfy the expectation of those that shall peruse what we now publish in this matter also.

“ 1. As to those Christians who consent with us *that repentance from dead works, and faith towards God and our Lord Jesus Christ, is required in persons to be baptized*; and do therefore supply the defect of the infant being incapable of making confession of either by others who do undertake these things for it. Although we do find by church history that this hath been a very ancient practice; yet considering that the same scripture which does caution us against censuring our brother, with whom we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ, does also instruct us, *that every one of us shall give an account of himself to God, and whatsoever is not of faith is sin*. Therefore we cannot for our own parts be persuaded in our own minds, to build such a practice as this upon an unwritten tradition: but do rather choose in all points of faith and worship, to have recourse to the holy scriptures for the information of our judgment and regulation of our practice; being well assured that a conscientious attending thereto is the best way to prevent and rectify our defects and errors. 2 Tim. iii. 16, 17. And if any such case happen to be debated among Christians which is not plainly determinable by the scriptures, we think it safest to leave

Baptists persecuted.

such things undecided until the second coming of our Lord Jesus; as they did in the church of old, until there should arise a priest with Urim and Thummim, that might certainly inform them of the mind of God thereabout, Ezra ii. 62, 63.

“ 2. As for those our Christian brethren who do ground their arguments for Infant Baptism upon a presumed fæderal holiness, or church-membership, we conceive they are deficient in this, that albeit this covenant holiness and membership should be as is supposed in reference unto the infants of believers; yet no command for infant baptism does immediately and directly result from such a quality or relation.

“ All instituted worship receives its sanction from the precept, and is to be thereby governed in all the necessary circumstances thereof, &c.”*

During the remaining part of this king's reign, “ the persecution of the nonconformists was continued and carried on (says Neal) to a pitch hardly to be paralleled in a protestant nation. Doctor Barlow, bishop of Lincoln, published a letter for putting the laws in execution against the dissenters, in concurrence with another drawn up by the justices of the peace at Bedford, bearing date January 14, 1684. Many were cited into the spiritual courts, excommunicated, and ruined. Two hundred warrants of distress were issued out upon private persons and families in the town and neighbourhood of Uxbridge, for frequenting conventicles, or not coming to church.”

The Baptists appear to have had their full share in the sufferings of these times. On November 19, 1682, the goods of Mr. Collins, a Baptist minister in London, were distrained by the officers breaking open the doors and entering

* Appendix, p. 109—115.

Death of Charles II.

the house. There were at this time latent convictions besides those that were executed against most of the Baptists distrained upon to the amount of one, two, or three hundred pounds each. We hear of no instance of improper conduct, excepting that of a man of the name of Warrman, a weaver, who told Jeffries that "he should recollect that he himself had been brought as an offender before the supreme court of the kingdom, and had seen the temper and gravity of many courts." Perhaps this was improper; but it was doubtless the effect of the passionate and illegal conduct of this drunken and dissolute judge, who violated every principle of justice and religion. The monarch by whom these shocking practices were enforced, or at least connived at, fell a victim to the king of terrors, February 6, 1684—5, in the fifty-fourth year of his age. It was strongly suspected that he was poisoned, as the body was not suffered to be thoroughly examined.

"The king (says Burnet) had a great many vices, and but few virtues to correct them. Religion was with him nothing more than an engine of state. He hated the Nonconformists because they appeared against the prerogative, and received the fire of all the enemies of the constitution and protestant religion with an unshaken firmness. His majesty's chief concern at last was for his brother's succession; and when he came to die, he showed no remorse for an ill-spent life. Not a word of religion was heard from him; no tenderness for his subjects, nor concern for his queen; but only a recommendation of his mistresses and their children to his brother. No Englishman or lover of his country could wish for the life of such a prince from any other motive than his keeping out a successor who was worse than himself."

* M. S. penes me.

Monmouth's Insurrection.

CHAP. X.

A. D. 1685—1700.

JAMES, the Duke of York, succeeded to the throne, and began his reign with a frank and open declaration of his religion. The first Lord's day after his accession he went publicly to mass, and obliged Father Huddleston, who attended the late king in his last hours, to declare to the world that he died a Roman Catholic.

The parliament fell in with all the king's measures; and to gratify his passion of revenge against those who had been averse to his accession on account of his religion, they presented an address to his majesty, May 27, to desire him to issue forth his royal proclamation to put the penal laws into execution against dissenters from the church of England. The opposition to them now became as severe as it ever had been in the late king's reign, and the rebellion of the Duke of Monmouth gave the court a plausible reason for carrying it to the greatest extremity. There is no doubt but many dissenters engaged in this ill-timed and ill-fated expedition, which terminated in the destruction of almost all who engaged in it. Amongst those of the Baptist denomination who were actively employed, were the grandfather and father of the late Dr. Gifford of Eagle Street, London. In a copy of the *Western Martyrology* which belonged to him, and which is now in the library at Bristol, is the following account in the Doctor's hand-writing.

“The Rev. Andrew Gifford (my grandfather) was with several others in the city of Bristol deeply engaged in the

Danger of Emanuel Gifford.

affair of the Duke of Monmouth. He collected a considerable sum, and provided ammunition. And when the Duke came near the city, he sent his son Emanuel to Knowl Castle, a mile out of the city, to invite the Duke and his friends in; assuring him that there were many friends and supplies provided, and that a part of the city walls was undermined to let them in with ease and safety. But the Duke of Beaufort, the Lord Lieutenant, having set fire to a ship in the harbour, and sent the Duke of Monmouth word that if he attempted the city he would burn it down, the Duke, seeing the flames, called a council of war, in which it was resolved to prevent the city from being destroyed. And thus being betrayed by those about him, especially Lord——, he desired my father to return his thanks to his friends, but, the council having determined otherwise, he should remove into the west, and earnestly desired my father to accompany him; which my father, perceiving that the Duke was betrayed, civilly refused, telling him he must now return as his commission was at an end. Accordingly he rode round near Caynsham bridge; but as he was going through Kingswood a friend met him, and asked him what he did there, telling him the plot was discovered, and that his errand to the Duke of Monmouth was publicly known, and a troop of horse was sent out to take him, and therefore bid him shift for his life. On hearing this he took off the saddle and bridle and turned his mare loose in the wood, and hid himself in a great bush near the high-way side, where he had not been more than a quarter of an hour before the troop came by, swearing if they could catch the heretical dog they would cut him as small as herbs for the pot; but missing their prey, a little before night they returned the same way, on which my father caught his mare, and as soon as it was dark re-

Jefferies' charge at Bristol.

turned home safe and kept out of the way for some time. He was a melancholy witness of the sufferings of five or six executed without Radcliff-Gate on the account of it, but lived to share in the joy of the Prince of Orange's arrival. The first news of whose embarkation at Helveotsloys was brought to Bristol by his brother Samuel Gifford, who sailed the very night before the prince; who entreated him to be his pilot through the channel, which he excused himself from lest it should ***** his cargo."

This circumstance accounts for the virulence with which Jefferies addressed the Grand Jury at Bristol in his return from the *Western Campaign*. "Certainly (said he) they had and must have great encouragement from a party within, or else why should their design be on this city?—Gentlemen, I tell you, I have the *Kalender of this city here in my hand*; I have heard of those that have searched into the very sink of a Conventicle to find out some sneaking rascal to hide their money. Come, come, gentlemen to be plain with you, I find the dirt of the ditch is in your nostrils.—It seems the Dissenters and Phanaticks fare well amongst you, by reason of the favour of the magistrates; for example, if a dissenter who is a notorious and obstinate offender, comes before them to be fined, one Alderman or other stands up, and says, he is a good man, (though three parts a rebel) well then for the sake of Mr. Alderman he shall be fined but five shillings. &c." The six persons who suffered on Radcliff Hill were, *Richard Evans, John Tinckwell, Christopher Clerk, Edward Tippet, Philip Cumbridge, and John Tucker, alias Glover.**

In a work published by Mr. Hercules Collins of Wapping, in the year 1691, he remarks, "It is well known that many

* *Western Martyr*. p. 264, 268.

Account of the Hewlings.

good men of most persuasions, of the church of England, Presbyterians, Independants, and Baptists, were zealously concerned in the Duke of Monmouth's time, and many fell. But know that victory is no argument of the best cause, nor best men; nor a defeat an argument of a bad cause, and bad men. No better men in the world than some who fell in the Duke's cause, in the west; yet by the hands of one of the most debauched armies that ever was in the world."—No greater stigma attaches to the adherents of the Duke of Monmouth, than would have attached to those of the Prince of Orange had he been equally unsuccessful.

Amongst the Baptists that fell, we are acquainted with two persons who, on account of their connections, deserve a place in our work. These were Mr. Benjamin and Mr. William Hewling, two brothers, whose characters and tragical end made a very great impression on the minds of the people of England. Noble, in his history of the Protectoral house of Cromwell, gives the following account of them. "These two amiable but unfortunate gentlemen were the only sons of Mr. Benjamin Hewling, a Turkey merchant of good fortune in London, who happily for himself died before them. After their father's death they were most carefully brought up by a tender mother, and their maternal grandfather, Mr. William Kiffin, who though very much advanced in years, as well as his wife, survived them both. The Hewlings and Kiffins were protestant dissenters, and the latter, if not the former, were Anabaptists."*

The excellent Mr. William Kiffin has left a manuscript account of his life, written when he was in his 77th year, for the use of his descendants, in which he has given a particular account of his grandsons. From this manuscript we

* Vol. ii. p. 454.

Their piety.

extract the following information respecting them. — “ Not long after the king died and James II. coming to the crown, the summer after his coming the Duke of Monmouth with a party came over with a few armed men that landed at Lyme, and I having a young grandson, William Hewling, at board and school in Holland, came over with him, although unknown to me or any of his friends, he being about the age of nineteen years. — And his eldest brother, Benjamin Hewling, conversing with those that were under great dissatisfaction, seeing popery encouraged and religion and liberty like to be invaded, did furnish himself with arms, and went to the said Duke and in the first fight, being afterwards both taken prisoners, were brought to Newgate, which to me was no small affliction. And it being given out that the king would make only some few that were taken examples, and the rest would leave to his officers to compound for their lives; I endeavoured with his mother to treat with a *great man*, and agreed to give three thousand pounds for their lives. But the face of things were soon altered, so that nothing but severity could be expected, and indeed we missed the right door; for the Lord Chief Justice finding agreements made with others, and so little to himself, was the more provoked to use all manner of cruelty to the poor prisoners, so that few escaped. Amongst the rest these two young men were executed. But how graciously the Lord shewed himself to them, both in their behaviour before their trial and at their deaths, the consideration thereof to such as please to peruse it; I think it may be of use to leave to you and to your children, and to such as may read the same which is as followeth.

“ The gracious dealings of God manifested to some in dying hours have been of great advantage to those living

They surrender themselves.

that have heard the same, giving them occasion thereby to reflect on their own state, and to look after the things of their peace before they be hid from their eyes; also a great encouragement to strengthen the faith of those that have experienced the grace of God to them.

“To that end ’tis thought necessary, by parents especially, to preserve to their children that remain, those blessed experiences that such have had which God hath taken to himself.

“Here therefore is presented a true account of the admirable appearances of God towards two young men; Mr. Benjamin Hewling, who died when he was about twenty-two years of age, and Mr. William Hewling, who died before he arrived to twenty years. They engaged with the Duke of Monmouth, as their own words were, for the English liberties, and the protestant religion, and for which Mr. William Hewling was executed at Lyme, the 12th of September 1685; and Mr. Benjamin Hewling at Taunton, the 30th of the same month; and however severe men were to them, yet the blessed dispensation of God to them was such, as hath made good his word, that out of the mouth of babes he hath ordained strength, that he may still the enemy and avenger.

“After the dispersing of the Duke’s army they fled and put to sea, but were driven back again, and with the hazard of their lives got ashore (over dangerous rocks) where they saw the country filled with soldiers, and they being unwilling to fall into the hands of the rabble, and no way of defence or escape remaining to them, they surrendered themselves prisoners to a gentleman whose house was near the place where they landed at, and were from thence sent to Exeter goal, the 12th of July, where remaining some time, their behaviour was such, that (being visited by many) caused great

Are brought to Newgate.

respect towards them, even of those that were enemies to the cause they engaged in, and being on the 27th of July put on board the Swan Frigate, in order to their bringing up to London, their carriage was such as obtained great kindness from their commander, and all other officers in the ship, and being brought into the river, Captain Richardson came and took them into custody, and carried them to Newgate, putting great irons upon them, and put them apart from each other, without giving liberty for the nearest relation to see them, notwithstanding all endeavours and entreaties used to obtain it, though in the presence of a keeper; which though it did greatly increase the grief of relations, God, who wisely orders all things for good to those he intends grace and mercy to, made this very restraint, and hard usage a blessed advantage to their souls, as may appear by their own words, when after great importunity and charge, some of their near relations had leave to speak a few words to them before the keeper, to which they replied, *they were contented with the will of God whatever it should be.* Having been in Newgate three weeks, there was order given to carry them down into the west, in order to their trial; which being told them they answered, *they were glad of it;* and as they went out of Newgate several that beheld them, seeing them so cheerful, said, surely they had received their pardon, else they could never carry it with that courage and cheerfulness. Although this must be observed, that from first to last whatever hopes they received from friends, they still thought the contrary, never being much affected with the hopes of it, nor cast down, nor the least discouraged at the worst that man could do. In their journey to Dorchester, the keepers that went with them have given this account of them, "that their carriage was so grave, serious, and Christian, that made them

Removed into the west.

admire to see and hear what they did from such young men.

“A near relation that went into the west to see the issue of things, and to perform whatsoever should be necessary for them, gives the following account—‘At Salisbury, the 30th of August, I had the first opportunity of conversing with them. I found them in a very excellent composure of mind, declaring their experience of the grace and goodness of God to them in all their sufferings, in supporting and strengthening them and providing for them, turning the hearts of all in whose hands they had been both at Exon and on shipboard, to shew pity and to favour them; although since they came to Newgate they were hardly used, and now in their journey loaded with heavy irons and more inhumanly dealt with. They with great cheerfulness professed that they were better and in a more happy condition than ever in their lives, from the sense they had of the pardoning love of God in Jesus Christ to their souls, wholly referring themselves to their wise and gracious God to chuse for them life or death, expressing themselves thus: “Any thing what pleaseth God, what he sees best, so be it. We know he is able to deliver; but if not, blessed be his name; death is not terrible now, but desirable.” Mr. Benjamin Hewling particularly added, “As for the world, there is nothing in it to make it worth while to live, except we may be serviceable to God therein.” He afterwards said, “Oh! God is a strong refuge: I have found him so indeed!”

“The next opportunity I had was at Dorchester, whither they were both carried, and remained together four days. By reason of their strait confinement, our conversation was much interrupted; but this appeared, that they had still the same presence and support from God, no way discouraged at the approach of their trial, nor at the event of it, whatever it should be.

Happiness of Mr. William Hewling.

“The sixth of September, Mr. Benjamin Hewling was ordered to Taunton to be tried there. Taking my leave of him, he said, Oh! blessed be God for afflictions. I would not have been without them for all this world.

“I remained still at Dorchester to wait the issue of *Mr. William Hewling*, to whom, after trial, I had free access, and whose discourse was much filled with admirings of the grace of God which had been manifested towards him in calling him out of his natural state. He said, God by his Holy Spirit did suddenly seize upon his heart when he thought not of it, in his retired abode in Holland, as it were secretly whispering in his heart, *Seek ye my face*, enabling him to answer his gracious call and to reflect upon his own soul, shewing him the evil of sin and the necessity of Christ, from that time carrying him on to a sensible adherence to Christ for justification and eternal life. Hence he found a spring of joy and sweetness beyond the comforts of the whole earth. He also said that he could not but admire the wonderful goodness of God in so preparing him for what he was bringing him to, which then he thought not of; giving him hope of eternal life before he called him to look death in the face, so that he did cheerfully resign his life to God before he came, having sought his guidance in it; and that both then and now, the cause did appear to him very glorious, notwithstanding all he had suffered in it, or what he farther might suffer; although for our sins, God hath withheld these good things from us. But he said, God carried on his blessed work on his own soul in and by all his sufferings; and whatever the will of God were, life or death, he knew it would be best for him.

“After he had received his sentence, when he returned to prison, he said, Methinks I find my spiritual comforts en-

His fortitude.

creasing ever since my sentence. There is no condemnation to them who are in Christ Jesus. It is God that justifieth; who shall condemn?

“ When I came to him the next morning, when he had received news that he must die the next day, and in order to it was to be carried to Lyme that day, I found him in a more excellent, raised, and spiritual frame than before. He was satisfied, he said, that God had chosen best for him. He knows what the temptations of life might have been. I might have lived and forgotten God; but now I am going where I shall sin no more. Oh, it is a blessed thing to be freed from sin, and to be with Christ! Oh, how great were the sufferings of Christ for me, beyond all I can undergo! How great is that glory to which I am going; it will soon swallow up all our sufferings here!

“ While he was at dinner, just before his going to Lyme, he dropped many abrupt expressions of his inward joy, such as these: Oh, the grace of God; the love of Christ! Oh, that blessed supper of the Lamb; to be for ever with the Lord! He farther said, When I went to Holland, you knew not what snares, sins, and miseries I might have fallen into, nor whether we should ever meet again: but now you know whither I am going, and that we shall certainly have a joyful meeting. He said, pray give my particular recommendations to all my friends, with acknowledgments for all their kindness. I advise them all to make sure of an interest in Christ, for he is the only comfort when we come to die.

“ One of the prisoners seemed to be troubled at the manner in which they were to die: to whom he replied, I bless God that I am reconciled to it all. Just as he was going to Lyme, he wrote these few lines to a friend, being hardly suffered to stay so long—I am going to launch into

His comforts in death.

eternity, I hope and trust, into the arms of my blessed Redeemer; to whom I commit you, and all my dear relations. My duty to my dear mother, and love to all my sisters, and the rest of my friends.

WILLIAM HEWLING.

“As they passed through the town of Dorchester to Lyme, multitudes of people beheld them with great lamentations, admiring his deportment at his parting with his sister. Passing on the road, his discourse was exceedingly spiritual, taking occasion from every thing to speak of the glory they were going to. Looking at the country as he passed, he said, This is a glorious creation: but what then is the paradise of God to which we are going! It is but a few hours, and we shall be there, and be for ever with the Lord.

“At Lyme, just before they went to die, reading John xiv. 8. he said to one of his fellow sufferers, Here is a sweet promise for us: *I will not leave you comfortless, I will come unto you.* Christ will be with us to the last. One taking leave of him, he said, Farewell till we meet in heaven. Presently I shall be with Christ. Oh, I would not change condition with any one in this world! I would not stay behind for ten thousand worlds!

“To another who asked him how he did, he said, Very well, blessed be God. And farther asking him whether he could look death in the face with comfort now it approached so near, he said, Yes, I bless God I can with great comfort. God hath made this a good night to me: my comforts are much encreased since I left Dorchester. Then taking leave of him, he said, Farewell, I shall see you no more.. To which he replied, How, see me no more? Yes, I hope to meet you in glory. To another who was by him to the last, he said, Pray remember my dear love to my brother and

Effect produced by it.

sister, and tell them I desire they would comfort themselves that I am gone to Jesus, and we shall quickly meet in Sion above.

“ Afterwards he prayed for about three quarters of an hour with the greatest fervency, exceedingly blessing God for Jesus Christ, adoring the riches of his grace in him, in all the glorious fruits of it towards him, praying for the peace of the church of God and of these nations in particular; all with such eminent assistance of the Spirit of God as convinced, astonished, and melted into pity the hearts of all present, even the most malicious adversaries, forcing tears and expressions from them; some saying they knew not what would become of them after death, but it was evident *he* was going to great happiness.

“ When just departing out of the world, with a joyful countenance he said, ‘ Oh, now my joy and comfort is that I have a Christ to go to;’ and so sweetly resigned his spirit to Christ, on the 12th of September, 1685.

“ An officer who had shewn so malicious a spirit as to call the prisoners devils, when he was guarding them down, was now so convinced that he afterwards told a person of quality that he never was so affected as by his cheerful carriage and fervent prayer, such as he believed was never heard, especially from one so young; and said, I believe, had the lord chief justice been there, he would not have let him die.

“ The sheriff having given his body to be buried, although it was brought from the place of execution without any notice given, yet very many of the town, to the number of two hundred, came to accompany him; and several young women of the best of the town laid him in his grave in Lyme church-yard, Sep. 13, 1685.

Letter of his Sister.

“ After which his sister wrote this following letter to her mother:—Although I have nothing to acquaint my dear mother withal, but what is most afflictive to sense, both as to the determination of God’s will and as to my present apprehension concerning my brother Benjamin who still remains; yet there is such an abundant consolation mixed in both, that I only wanted an opportunity to pay this duty; God having wrought so glorious a work on both their souls, revealing Christ in them, that death is become their friend. My brother William having already with the greatest joy declared to those that were with him to the last, that he would not change conditions with any that were to remain in this world, and he desired that his relations would comfort themselves that he is gone to Christ. My brother *Benjamin* expects not long to continue in this world, and is quite willing to leave it when God shall call, being fully satisfied that God will chuse what is best for him and for us all. By these things God doth greatly support me, and I hope you also, my dear mother, which was and is my brother’s great desire. There is still some room to pray for one; and God having so answered, though not in kind, we have encouragement still to wait on him.

Honoured mother,

Your dutiful daughter.

“ When I came to Taunton to *Mr. Benjamin Hewling*, he had received the news of his brother’s being gone to die with so much comfort and joy, and afterwards of the continued goodness of God in encreasing it to the end, expressed himself to this effect—We have no cause to fear death, if the presence of God be with us, there is no evil in it, the sting

Experience of Benjamin Hewling.

being taken away. It is nothing but our ignorance of the glory the saints pass into by death which makes it appear dark to ourselves or our relations: if in Christ, what is this world that we should desire an abode in it? It is all vain and unsatisfying, full of sin and misery.—He also intimated his own cheerful expectations soon to follow, discovering then and all along great seriousness and sense of spiritual and eternal things, complaining of nothing in his present circumstance but want of a place of retirement to converse more uninterruptedly with God and his own soul; saying that his lonely time in Newgate was the sweetest in his whole life. He said God had some time before struck his heart, when he thought of the hazard of his life, to some serious sense of his past life, and the great consequences of death and eternity, shewing him that they were the only happy persons that had secured their eternal state; the folly and madness of the ways of sin and his own thralldom therein, with his utter inability to deliver himself, also the necessity of Christ for salvation. He said it was not without terror and amazement for some time the sight of unpardoned sin with eternity before him. But God wonderfully opened to him the riches of free grace in Christ Jesus for poor sinners to flee to, enabling him to look alone to a crucified Christ for salvation. He said his blessed work was in some measure carried on upon his soul amidst all his business and hurries in the army, but never sprung forth so fully and sweetly till his close confinement in Newgate. There he saw Christ and all spiritual objects more clearly, and embraced them more strongly: there he experienced the blessedness of a reconciled state, the excellency of the ways of holiness, the delightfulness of communion with God, which remained with deep and apparent impressions on his own soul, which he frequently expressed

His resignation.

with admiration of the grace of God towards him. Perhaps my friends, said he, may think this the saddest summer of my life; but, I bless God, it hath been the sweetest and happiest of it all; nay, there is nothing else that deserves the name of happiness. I have in vain sought satisfaction from the things of this world, but I never found it. But now I have found rest for my soul in God alone.

“ Oh how great is our blindness by nature; till God opens our eyes we can see no excellency in spiritual things, but spend our precious time in pursuing shadows, and are deaf to all the invitations of grace and glorious offers of the gospel. How just is God in depriving us of that we so much slighted and abused. Oh, his infinite patience and goodness, that after all he should sanctify any methods to bring a poor sinner to himself! Oh, electing love, distinguishing grace! What great cause have I to admire and adore it!—What an amazing consideration is the suffering of Christ for sin to bring us to God! His suffering from wicked men was exceeding great: but alas, what was that to the dolours of his soul under the infinite wrath of God! This mystery of grace and love is enough to swallow up our thoughts to all eternity.

“ As to his own death he would often say, He saw no reason to expect any other. I know God is infinitely able to deliver, and am sure he will do it, if it be for his glory and my good. In which I bless God, I am fully satisfied. It is all my desire that he would choose for me, and then I am sure it will best, what ever it be. For truly unless God have some work for me to do in the world for his service and glory, I see nothing else to make life desirable. In the present state of affairs, there is nothing to cast our eyes upon but sin, sorrow, and misery; and were things ever so agreeable to

His spiritual conversation.

our desires, it is but the world still, which will never be a resting place. Heaven is the only state of rest and happiness: there we shall be perfectly free from sin and temptation, and enjoy God without interruption for ever.

“ Speaking of the disappointment of their [expectations in the work they had undertaken, he said with reference to the glory of God, the prosperity of the gospel, and the delivery of the people of God, we have great cause to lament it; but for that outward and prosperity which would have accompanied it, it is of small moment in itself. As it would not satisfy, so neither could it be abiding; for at longest, death would have put an end to it all. Also adding, nay, perhaps we might have been so foolish as to be taken with part of it, to the neglect of our eternal concerns; and then I am sure our present circumstances are incomparably better.

“ He frequently expressed great concern for the glory of God, and affection to his people, saying, If my death may advance God’s glory, and hasten the deliverance of his people, it is enough. Saying it was a great comfort to him to think of so great a privilege as that of having an interest in all their prayers. In his converse he particularly delighted in those persons in whom he saw most holiness shining: also great pity to the souls of others, saying that the remembrance of our former vanity may well cause compassion towards others in that state. In his converse he prompted them to seriousness, telling them that death and eternity were such weighty concerns that they deserved the utmost attention of our minds; for the way to receive death cheerfully is to prepare for it seriously; and if God should please to spare our lives, surely we have the same reason to be serious, and spend our remaining days in his fear and service. He also took great care that the worship of God

His transports.

which they were in a capacity of maintaining there, might be duly performed; as reading, praying, and singing of psalms, in which he evidently took great delight.

“ For those three or four days before their deaths, when there was a general report that no more should die, he said, I do not know what God hath done contrary to our expectations: if he doth prolong my life, I am sure it is all his own, and by his grace I will wholly devote it to him. But on the 29th of September, about ten or eleven at night, we found the deceitfulness of this report, they being then told that they must die the next morning, which was very unexpected as to the suddenness of it. But herein God glorified his power, grace, and faithfulness, in giving suitable support and comfort by his blessed presence, which appeared upon my coming to him at that time and finding him greatly composed. He said, Though men design to surprise, God doth and will perform his word, to be a very present help in trouble.

“ The next morning, when I saw him again, his cheerfulness and comfort were much encreased, waiting for the sheriff with the greatest sweetness and serenity of mind; saying, Now the will of God is determined, to whom I have referred it, and he hath chosen most certainly what is best. Afterwards, with a smiling countenance, he discoursed of the glory of heaven, remarking with much delight the third, fourth, and fifth verses of the twenty-second of the Revelations: *And there shall be no more curse; but the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it, and his servants shall serve him, and they shall see his face, and his name shall be in their foreheads; and there shall be no night there, and they shall need no candle, nor light of the sun; and they shall reign for ever and ever.* Then he said, Oh, what a happy state is this! Shall we be loth to go and enjoy this? He

Remarkable circumstance.

then desired to be read to him 2. Cor. v. 1.—11. *For we know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens, &c.* His hope and comfort still encreasing, with the assurance of an interest in that glorious inheritance to the possession of which he was now going, he said, death was more desirable than life, and he had rather die than live any longer here.—As to the manner of his death, he said, When I have considered others under these circumstances, I have thought it very dreadful; but now God hath called me to it, I bless him that I have quite other apprehensions of it. I can now cheerfully embrace it as an easy passage to glory; and though death separates from the enjoyment of each other here, it will be but for a very short time, and then we shall meet in such enjoyments as now we cannot conceive, and for ever rejoice in each other's happiness.—Then reading the scriptures and musing with himself, he intimated the great comfort which God conveyed to his soul in it; saying, Oh, what an invaluable treasure is this blessed word of God! In all conditions here is a store of strong consolation. One desiring his bible, he said, No: this shall be my companion to the last moment of my life. Thus praying together, reading, meditating, and conversing of heavenly things, they waited for the sheriff, who when he came, void of all pity or civility, hurried them away, scarcely suffering them to take leave of their friends. Notwithstanding this, and the doleful mourning of all about them, the joyfulness of his countenance was encreased. Thus he left the prison, and thus he appeared in the sledge, where they sat about half an hour before the officers could force the horses to draw; at which they were greatly enraged, there being no visible obstruction from weight or way. At last the mayor

His Execution.

and sheriff haled them forwards themselves, Balaam like, driving the horses.

“ When they came to the place of execution, which was surrounded with spectators, many that waited their coming, said, that when they saw him and them come with such cheerfulness and joy, and evidence of the presence of God with them, it made death appear with another aspect.—They first embraced each other with the greatest affection; then two of the elder persons praying audibly, they joined with great seriousness. Then he required leave of the sheriff to pray particularly; but he would not grant it, and only asked him, whether he would pray for the king. He answered, I pray for all men. He then requested that they might sing a hymn. The sheriff told him it must be with the rope about their necks; which they cheerfully accepted, and sung with such heavenly joy and sweetness that many who were present said, it both broke and rejoiced their hearts. Thus in the experience of the delightfulness of praising God on earth, he willingly closed his eyes on a vain world, to pass to that eternal enjoyment, on September 30, 1685.

“ All present of all sorts were exceedingly affected and amazed. Some officers who had before insultingly said, Surely these persons have no thoughts of death, but will find themselves surprised by it, now acknowledged that they saw he and they had something extraordinary within, which carried them through with so much joy. Others said that they were so convinced of their happiness that they would be glad to change conditions with them. The soldiers in general, and all others, lamented exceedingly, saying, It was so sad a thing to see them so cut off that they scarcely knew how to bear it. Some of the most malicious in the place, from whom nothing but railing was expected, said, as they were

Letter to his Mother.

carried to their grave in Taunton church, These persons have left sufficient evidence that they were now glorified spirits in heaven. A great officer also in the king's army has often been heard to say, If you would learn to die, go to the young men of Taunton.—Much more was uttered by these good men, which showed the blessed frame of their hearts, to the glory of divine grace. But this is what occurs to memory. Mr. Benj. Hewling, about two hours before his death, wrote the following letter, which shewed his great composue of mind.

“Honoured Mother,

“That news which I know you have a great while feared, and we expected, I must now acquaint you with; that notwithstanding the hopes you gave in your two last letters, warrants are come down for my execution, and within these few hours I expect it to be performed. Blesssd be the Almighty God, who gives comfort and support in such a day! How ought we to magnify his holy name for all his mercies, that when we were running on in a course of sin he should stop us in full career, and show us that Saviour whom we had pierced, and out of his free grace enable us to look upon him with an eye of faith, believing him able to save to the utmost all such as come to him! Oh, admirable long suffering patience of God; that when we were dishonouring his name, he did not take that time to bring honour to himself by our destruction! But he delighteth not in the death of a sinner, but had rather he should turn to him and live: and he hath many ways of bringing his own to himself. Blessed be his holy name, he has taught my heart in some measure to be conformable to his will, which worketh patience, and patience experience, and experience hope, which maketh not ashamed. I bless God that I am not ashamed of the cause for which I lay down my life; and as I have engaged in it,

Letter continued.

and fought for it, so now I am going to seal it with my blood. The Lord will still carry on the same cause which hath been long on foot; and though we die in it and for it, I question not but in his own good time he will raise up other instruments more worthy to carry it on to the glory of his name, and the advancement of his church and people.

“Honoured mother, I know there has been nothing left undone by you or my friends for the saving of my life, for which I return many hearty acknowledgements to yourself and to them all; and it is my dying request to you and them, to pardon all undutifulness and unkindness in every relation. Pray give my duty to my grandfather and grandmother; service to my uncles and aunts; and my dear love to all my sisters; to every relation and friend a particular recommendation. Pray tell them all how precious an interest in Christ is when we come to die, and advise them never to rest in a Christless state. For if we are his, it is no matter what the world do to us: they can but kill the body, and blessed be God, for the soul is out of their reach. I question not but their malice wishes the damnation of that, as well as the destruction of the body, which has too evidently appeared by their deceitful flattering promises.

“I commit you all to the care and protection of God, who has promised to be a Father to the fatherless, and a husband to the widow, and to supply the want of every relation. The Lord God of heaven be your comfort under these sorrows, and your refuge from those miseries which we may easily foresee coming upon poor England, and the poor distressed people of God in it. The Lord carry you through this vale of tears with a resigning submissive spirit; and at last bring you to himself in glory; where I question not but you will meet your dying son,

BENJAMIN HEWLING.”

His Sister petitions the King.

Mr. Kiffin adds to this statement, "Only for myself it was a great comfort to me, and is to observe what testimony they left behind of that blessed interest they had in the Lord Jesus, and their humble and holy confidence of their eternal happiness.

"One thing I think it necessary to observe, that at the trial of William Hewling, the Lord Chief Justice Jefferies was pleased in public court, to tell him, that his grandfather did as well deserve that death, which he was like to suffer as they did. Which I mention to that end, that thereby it may be seen what an eye they had upon me for my ruin, if the Lord who hath watched over me for good, had not prevented."

The relation who attended them in the west, and from whom Mr. Kiffin received, his account, was their sister, Hannah Hewling, who, about a year afterwards, married Major Henry Cromwell, and who died in 1731. When all other means had failed, she determined to present a petition to the King. For this purpose she was introduced by Lord Churchill, afterwards Duke of Marlborough: while they waited in the antichamber for admittance, standing near the chimney-piece, Lord Churchill assured her of his most hearty wishes of success to her petition. "But, madam, (said he) I dare not flatter you with any such hopes, for that marble is as capable of feeling compassion as the king's heart." This declaration of Lord Churchill, adds no small credibility to Jefferies' report of the king's obdurate cruelty.*

Noble observes, "It has been said in most of the accounts which have been published, that lord chief justice Jefferies always treated Hannah Hewling according to his usual custom, with the greatest brutality; but this is not true: for Jefferies always treated her with the greatest po-

* Memoirs of Cromwell, vol. ii. p. 462.

Their character.

liteness and respect. This instance however does not much soften the horror of his general character. Jefferies had a relation from whose fortune he had formed great expectations; and as this relation was an intimate acquaintance of the Hewlings, he exerted himself very warmly with him on their behalf. He repeatedly protested to the chief justice, "that the continuance of his friendship, together with every benefit he might hope to result from it, depended entirely on his using every endeavour to save the Hewlings. This Jefferies declared that he did; but he always declared that the king was inexorable.

"When Jefferies was afterwards a prisoner in the tower, he complained to Dr. Scott, author of *The Christian Life*, and who visited him under his confinement, of his hard fate. 'I was hated (said he) by the kingdom for doing so much in the west, and I was ill received by the king for not having done more.' He used almost the same words when he was applied to for the Hewlings. Burnet says, 'the king took pleasure to relate the cruelties of Jefferies in the drawing-room to foreign ministers, and at his table called it Jefferies' campaign.' At the return of this infamous wretch, he created him a baron and peer of England, as a reward for his faithful services.

"For many reasons it would be improper (adds Noble) to omit what Mr. Hewling Luson has said of these two young men. 'The two unfortunate brothers, Benjamin and William Hewling, were the only males of their name, and of their family, which was in the highest esteem and popularity among the staunch whigs and dissenting protestants, at that time so numerous and respectable in the city. Their parts were excellent, and their education was the best that could be given them; their morals were spotless, their piety ex-

Their character.

emplary; their zeal against popery, the ardour of their courage in the field, and the manly meekness, and devout resignation of their deportment to the last, under their sufferings, concurred with their youth, the one twenty-one and the other not quite twenty, and the uncommon beauty and gracefulness of their persons, to place them the first in the list which was at that time called the *Western martyrology*, and to render the severity of their fate most pitied of any who fell a sacrifice to the popish vengeance of James, though there were some other sentences much more unjust.”*

We conclude this account with the sentiments of Mr. Benjamin Keach concerning them, who, from his intimate acquaintance with their grandfather, was well qualified to describe their characters. In his poem, entitled *Distressed Zion relieved*, dedicated to King William and Queen Mary, in 1689, he has this lamentation as the language of Zion.

“ Now stop mine eyes, for fear your floods should fail,
 And I want tears for all I must bewail :
 But yet I need not doubt ; springs I espy,
 Yea fountains which will give a fresh supply
 For two young plants, who both sprung from one stem,
 Beloved of God, I hope, as well as men.
 Dear *Hewlings*, of what use might you have been,
 If you to spare, the Almighty good had seen!
 What cruel tyrants had we lately here,
 That two such tender branches would not spare?
 But when I think of grace that they had store,
 And with what patience they their sufferings bore,
 It gives such comfort, I can weep no more. }
 What testimony did they leave behind,
 Of that sweet joy which they in Christ did find?
 When wicked men all pity did deny,
 Our Saviour to compassion’s moved thereby ;
 And doubtless they are pleased in that high sphere
 Where the spirits of just men triumphant are.”

* *Memoirs of Cromwell*, vol. ii. p. 460.

Mrs. Gaunt apprehended,

The king apprehending that many of the rebels had got to London and were concealed there, was desirous of finding out the persons who harboured them, as he declared he would sooner pardon the rebels than these. One of the persons who suffered on this account was of the Baptist denomination. Bishop Burnet gives the following account of this matter. "There was in London (says he) one Gaunt, a woman that was an Anabaptist, who spent a great part of her life in acts of charity, visiting the jails, and looking after the poor of what persuasion soever they were. One of the rebels found her out, and she harboured him in her house, and was looking for an occasion of sending him out of the kingdom. He went about in the night, and came to hear what the king had said. So he by an unheard-of baseness went and delivered himself, and accused her that had harboured him. She was seized on, and tried. There was no witness to prove that she knew the person she harboured was a rebel, except he himself. Her maid witnessed only that he was entertained at her house: but though her crime was that of harbouring a traitor, and was proved only by this infamous witness, yet the judge charged the jury to bring her in guilty, pretending that the maid was a second witness, though she knew nothing of that which was the criminal part. She was condemned and burnt, as the law directs in the case of women convicted of treason. She died with a constancy, even to cheerfulness, that struck all who saw it. She said, charity was a part of her religion as well as faith: this at worst was feeding an enemy. So she hoped that she had reward with him for whose sake she did this service, how unworthy soever the person was who made so ill a return for it. She rejoiced that God had honoured her to be the first that suffered by fire in this reign, and that her suffering was

And executed.

a martyrdom for that religion which was all love. Penn the quaker told me that he saw her die. She laid the straw about her for burning her speedily, and behaved herself in such a manner that all the spectators melted in tears.”*

She was executed according to her sentence, at Tyburn, Oct. 23, 1685, and left the following paper written with her own hand, and delivered it to Captain Richardson, then keeper of Newgate.

“Not knowing whether I shall be suffered, or able, because of weaknesses that are upon me, through my hard and close imprisonment, to speak at the place of execution, I have written these few lines to signify that I am reconciled to the ways of my God towards me; though it is in ways I looked not for, and by terrible things, yet in righteousness; for having given me life, he ought to have the disposing of it when and where he pleases to call for it. And I desire to offer up my all to him, it being my reasonable service, and also the first terms which Christ offers, that he who will be his disciple must forsake all and follow him. Therefore let none think hard, or be discouraged at what hath happened unto me; for he doth nothing without cause in all that he hath done unto me; he being holy in all his ways, and righteous in all his works, and it is but my lot in common with poor desolate Zion at this day. Neither do I find in my heart the least regret for any thing I have done in the service of my Lord and Master, Jesus Christ, in securing and succouring any of his poor sufferers that have shewed favour, as I thought, to his righteous cause; which cause though it be now fallen and trampled on, yet it may revive, and God may plead it in at another time more than ever he hath yet done, with all its opposers and malicious haters. And therefore let all that

* Burnet's History of his own Times, vol. ii. p. 649.

Mrs. Gaunt's Testimony.

love and fear him not omit the least duty that comes to hand or lies before them, knowing that now Christ hath need of them, and expects they should serve him. And I desire to bless his holy name that he hath made me useful in my generation, to the comfort and relief of many desolate ones; that the blessing of many who were ready to perish hath come upon me, and I have helped to make the widow's heart leap for joy. And I bless his holy name that in all this, together with what I was charged with, I can approve my heart to him, that I have done his will, though it doth cross man's. The scriptures which satisfy me are these: *Hide the outcasts; bewray not him that wandereth. Let mine outcasts dwell with thee: be thou a covert to them from the face of the spoiler—Thou shouldst not have delivered up those of his that did remain in the day of distress.* Isai. xvi. 5, 4. Obad. 12, 13, 14. But men say you must give them up, or die for it. Now whom to obey judge ye. So that I have cause to rejoice and be exceeding glad, in that I suffer *for righteousness sake*, and that I am counted worthy to suffer *for well doing*; and that God hath accepted any service from me, which hath been done in sincerity, though mixed with manifold infirmities, which he hath been pleased for Christ's sake to cover and forgive.

“And now as concerning my crime, as it is now called; alas, it was but a little one, and such as might well become a prince to forgive.” But he that shews no mercy shall find none; and I may say of it in the language of Jonathan, I did but taste a little honey, and lo, I must die for it! I did but relieve an unworthy, poor, distressed family, and lo, I must die for it. Well, I desire in the lamb-like nature of the gospel to forgive those that are concerned; and to say, *Lord, lay it not to their charge!* But I fear he will not; nay, I believe, when he comes to make inquisition for blood, it will be found at

Continued.

the door of the *furious judge* [Withers]; who because I could not remember things, through my dauntedness at Burton's wife and daughters witness, and my ignorance, took advantage of it, and would not hear me when I had called to mind that which I am sure would have invalidated the evidence. And though he granted something of the same kind to another, he denied it to me. At that time my blood will also be found at the door of the *unrighteous jury*, who found me guilty upon the single oath of an outlawed man; for there was none but his oath about the money, who is no legal witness, though he be pardoned, his outlawry not being reversed, also the law requiring *two* witnesses in point of treason. As to my going with him to the place mentioned, namely, the Hope, it was by his own word before he could be outlawed, for it was about two months after his absconding. So that though he was in a proclamation, yet not high treason, as I am informed; so that I am clearly murdered. And also bloody Mr. Atterbury, who hath so insatiably hunted after my life, though it is no profit to him, yet through the ill will he bears me left no stone unturned, as I have ground to believe, till he brought it to this, and shewed favour to Burton, who ought to have died for his own fault, and not to have bought his own life with mine. Captain Richardson, who is cruel and severe to all under my circumstances, did at that time without any mercy or pity, hasten my sentence, and held up my hand that it might be given. All which, together with the great one of all [James II] by whose power all these and multitudes more of cruelties are done, I do heartily and freely forgive as against me; but as it is done in an implacable mind against the Lord Jesus Christ, and his righteous cause and followers, I leave it to Him who is the avenger of all such wrong, and *who will tread upon princes as upon mortar, and be terrible to the kings of the earth.*

Continued.

“ Know this also that though you are seemingly fixed, and because of the power in your hands are weighing out your violence, and dealing with a spiteful mind because of the old and new hatred, by impoverishing and every way distressing those you have got under you; yet unless you can secure Jesus Christ, and also his holy angels, you shall never do your business, nor shall your hand accomplish your enterprize. He will be upon you ere you are aware; and therefore that you would be wise, instructed, and learn, is the desire of her that finds no mercy from you!

ELIZABETH GAUNT.”

“ P. S. Such as it is, you have from the hand of her who hath done as she could, and is sorry she can do no better; hopes you will pity, and consider, and cover weaknesses and shortness, and any thing that is wanting; and begs that none may be weakened or stumble by my lowness of spirit, for God’s design is to humble and abase, that he also may be exalted in that day. And I hope he will appear in a needful time and hour, and it may be he will reserve the best wine till the last, as he hath done for some before me. None goeth a warfare at his own charges, and the spirit blows not only where and when it listeth; and it becomes me who have so often grieved it and quenched it, to wait for and upon his motions, and not to murmur; but I may mourn, because through the want of it I honour not my God nor his blessed cause, which I have so long loved and delighted to serve; and repent of nothing but that I have served it and him no better.”

In a work entitled *A display of Tyranny*, there are some remarks upon the trial of this good woman which are highly creditable to her character. “ Were my pen (says the author)

Character of Mrs. Gaunt.

qualified to represent the due character of this excellent woman, it would be readily granted that she stood most deservedly entitled to an eternal monument of honour in the hearts of all sincere lovers of the reformed religion. All true christians, though in some things differing in persuasion from her, found in her a universal charity and sincere friendship, as is well known to many here, and also to a multitude of the Scotch nation, ministers and others, who for conscience sake were thrust into exile from prelatic rage. These found in her a most refreshing refuge. She dedicated herself with unwearied industry to provide for their supply and support, and therein I do incline to think she outstripped every individual, if not the whole body of protestants in this city. Hereby she became exposed to the implacable fury of the bloody papists, and those blind tools who co-operated to promote their accursed designs; and so there appeared little difficulty to procure a jury, as there were well prepared judges, to make her a sacrifice as a traitor to *holy church*.*

Mrs. Gaunt was executed on the same day as Alderman Cornish, who on account of his having zealously opposed the exclusion bill in the late reign, was obnoxious to the court. Mr. Keach in the before-mentioned poem, takes notice of this event. Distressed Zion is introduced as saying,

“ Who can forbear to weep, or who forbear to tell,
 What to a pious woman then befel?
 Poor Mistress Gaunt, most dear thou wast to me,
 Few of thy sex ever excelled thee
 In zeal, in knowledge, or in charity;
 Who wast condemned a cruel death to die,
 'Cause thou relievedst men in misery.
 These two I must bewail, who in one day,
 By Romish treachery were swept away.”

* Crosby, vol. iii. p. 185—193.

Absolute Monarchy.

The prosecution of the dissenters was still carried on with all imaginable severity, and great were the oppressions of those who frequented separate meetings both in London and the country. The justices and clergy were equally diligent in their several parishes. The spiritual courts were again opened. Injunctions were sent out by the bishops under the seal of their offices to all ministers in their dioceses strictly to enjoin and require all church-wardens to present those who came not to church, or that received not the sacrament the preceeding Easter. These were published on Lord's-day, July 4, 1686, in Hertfordshire, within the diocese of Lincoln, and in Essex within that of London, and in several other places. "So terrible were these times (says Neal) that many families and ministers removed with their effects to New England." The king took large strides towards asserting absolute power, in which he was supported by the judges, who all but one gave it as their opinion, "(1.) That the laws of England were the king's laws—(2.) That it is an inseparable branch of the prerogative of the king's of England, as of all other sovereign princes, to dispense with all penal laws on particular occasions—(3.) That of these reasons and cases the king is the sole judge—(4.) That this is not a trust now invested in and granted to the present king, but the antient remains of the sovereign power of the kings of England, which was never yet taken from them nor can be." Thus the laws of England were given up at once into the hands of the king by the voice of his judges.

This point being secured, his majesty began to espouse the cause of the nonconformists. "All on a sudden (says Burnet) the churchmen were disgraced, and the dissenters in high favour. Lord chief justice Herbert, went the western circuit after Jefferies, and was now made lord chancellor,

Baptists address the King.

and all was grace and favour to them. Their former sufferings were much reflected upon and pitied; every thing was offered that might alleviate them; their ministers were encouraged to set up their conventicles, which had been discontinued or held very secretly for four or five years; intimations were given every where that the king would not have them nor their meetings disturbed."

This mark of royal favour appears to have produced the effect designed on some of the dissenters. An address was presented from some of the Baptists in London to the king by the following ministers; namely, Messrs. Coxe, Collins, Jones, Plant, and Dennis, and signed by three others. It was said to contain these passages: "That they made their very thankful acknowledgements for his majesty's gracious pardon to all his subjects; that they were deeply sensible thereof; that they would be very obedient subjects, and venture their lives and fortunes for his majesty." This address was shewed to many of the courtiers by the king while the petitioners were on their knees, at which they were very merry. The king answered them by saying, "That if they carried themselves loyally, they should find protection." From this it was credibly reported that the Baptists had an assurance that they might not only have a pardon for what was past, but a patent to give them impunity for keeping meetings or conventicles in their own way, behaving themselves peaceably.*

To carry the king's designs into effect, a Dispensation or License office was instituted, where all who applied might have indulgences on paying only fifty shillings for themselves and their families. Many who had been prosecuted for keeping conventicles took out those licences, which not only stopped all processes that were commenced, but gave them liberty to go publicly to meetings for the future.

* M. S. penes me.

Affair at Abingdon.

A curious circumstance of this kind took place at Abingdon, where there were many Baptists who had been greatly persecuted and forced to shut up their meeting. The pastor at this time was Mr. Henry Forty, who will be noticed in another part of our work. We are not furnished with the names of the persons who were implicated in this affair, but seven of the Baptists had been indicted at the assizes, on the 23rd of Elizabeth, for not going to church, and others were presented in the spiritual courts for not receiving the sacrament at Easter. Their trial came on at the assizes in July 1686, before Mr. Justice Holloway and Mr. Justice Luwick. Their offences were greatly aggravated by the Recorder, Mr. Finmore, and their enemies were certain of convicting them. But the dissenters' counsel, Mr. Medlecot, who had been lately turned out of the recordership of the town, and had formerly received many rebukes from the lord chancellor who probably had displaced him, brought them out of their difficulty. When he stood up on their behalf, the court said, "Are you detained by these people?" Yes, said Mr. Medlecot. Judge Holloway being on the bench, the court answered, "We thought so;" and looked very sourly upon him. Mr. Medlecot replied, "Your lordship has served them more effectually than I." At this his lordship was much offended. "And they give you greater thanks," added Mr. Medlecot; "for your lordship and my lords the judges have declared his majesty a sovereign prince; that the laws are his laws; that he might dispense with them when it was necessary; that he was judge of that necessity; and he has thought it necessary in the case of these defendants." He then produced a patent under the broad seal.

These people expecting no mercy from the court, had applied to an attorney and told him their case, and said they

Continued.

had heard that Mr. Brent had obtained dispensations for others, and hoped he would be ready to do the like for them. The attorney told them to get their case signed by two justices of the peace of the county; but as they knew none sufficiently friendly, he got it done for them by two justices who knew nothing about them. The attorney being acquainted with Mr. Brent, sent it up to London to him, and he procured the dispensation from his majesty, who was pleased to grant them his pardon for crimes past, and a patent under his broad seal. This was commanded to be produced and shewed to the clerk of the assizes, and to be recorded by the clerk of the peace and the surrogates of the spiritual courts. All further prosecutions founded on any penal statutes in ecclesiastical matters were immediately to cease.

The dispensation being produced in court, most of those who were present were filled with consternation; their colour changed, and they hung down their heads with grief. The defendants were discharged by public proclamation in the court, and set at liberty on Saturday, July 10, 1686. The very same evening they prepared and cleaned their old meeting-house; and the next day, both in the morning and afternoon, many hundreds assembled very quietly and without any disturbance. The patent, which extended to these twenty five persons and their whole families, cost about twenty-six pounds.

The state of things was now very peculiar; the hierarchists severely persecuting the dissenters, and the king granting dispensations under his broad seal. Thus cross winds sometimes raise waves which break the force of each other, and thereby the vessel is preserved.

The patent granted on this occasion being curious, and as we do not recollect seeing any copy of it published, it is subjoined for the gratification of the reader.

Royal Patent.

“ We whose names are hereunto subscribed do certify that A. B. C. to the best of our knowledge have demeaned and behaved themselves peaceably and quietly towards his late majesty King Charles II., and his present majesty King James II., and their governments.

“ Given under our hands and seals this day of July 1686, by two justices of the peace in the county of Berks.

“ Granted thereupon.

“ J. R. Whereas our most dear brother the late king deceased had signified his intentions to his attorney-general for the pardoning such of his subjects who had been sufferers in the late times of usurpation and rebellion for their loyalty, and whose parents and nearest relations had then been sufferers for the same cause, or who had themselves testified their loyalty and affection to the government; and were presented, indicted, and convicted for not taking or refusing to take the oath of allegiance or supremacy, or one of them; or had been prosecuted upon the prerogative writ called the long writ of the exchequer for the penalty of twenty pounds per mensem, or upon outlawries or writs de. excom. cap., or other processes for the causes aforesaid; or for not coming to church or receiving the sacrament of the Lord's supper according to the usage of the church of England, or by reason of their convictions of recusancy or exercise of their religion, or who were otherwise prosecuted as recusants, or imprisoned for any of the crimes aforesaid; and for the doing thereof our said brother in divers counties had given orders. Now in pursuance of these gracious intentions of our said most dear brother, and for that the persons hereunto annexed have produced unto us, certificates of their services and sufferings of themselves, their parents, and

Royal Patent.

nearest relations; our will and pleasure therefore is that the persons mentioned in the said schedule, their wives, families and servants shall not in any sort be prosecuted and molested for any of the causes above mentioned. Wherefore we commend and direct you and every one of you in your respective places to forbear all prosecution against the said persons, their wives, families, and servants, and every of them; and that you cause all processes and proceedings whatsoever so commenced and issued, or to be commenced or issued against the said persons, their wives, families, servants, and every of them, for the causes aforesaid, to be wholly superseded, discharged, or stayed; and they and every one of them absolutely discharged and set at liberty until our royal will and pleasure be further known or signified unto you respectively. And for doing these, and for the entry and enrolment thereof with you respectively, shall be unto you and every of you respectively a sufficient warrant.

“ Given at our court at Windsor, the 7th of July, in the second year of our reign, 1686.

SUNDERLAND.

By his Majesty's command.”

“ To all archbishops and bishops, their chancellors and commissaries; and to all archdeacons and their officials, and all others exercising any ecclesiastical jurisdiction; and to our judges and justices of assize, of gaol delivery, justices of the peace, sheriffs, mayors, bailiffs, and all other persons whom it may in any wise concern.”*

In 1687, the king was resolved to humble the church of England, because many of that community were not willing to go all the lengths he wished, though they had constantly

* M S. penes me

Character of the Baptists.

professed the doctrines of nonresistance and passive obedience. For this purpose he began to flatter the dissenters with promises of his favour, and endeavoured by his agents to persuade them to accept the kindness of the king, and to concur with him in his designs.

Though the dissenters had been so much oppressed, yet they were a powerful and respectable class of the people; and notwithstanding so many of them had left the country, they were still very numerous. Burnet says, "The dissenters at this time were divided into four main bodies; the Presbyterians, the Independants, the Anabaptists, and the Quakers. The former had not the visible distinction of different rites; and the dispute about the constitution and subordination of churches, which had broken them when power was in their hands, was now forgotten in their depressed condition; so that they were looked upon as one body, and were above three parts in four of all the dissenters. The main difference between these was, that the presbyterians seemed reconcilable to the church; for they loved episcopal ordination and a liturgy, and upon some amendments seemed disposed to come into the church; and they liked civil government, and limited monarchy. But as the Independants were for a commonwealth in the state, so they put all the power of the church in the people, and thought that their choice was an ordination, nor did they approve of set forms of worship. Both were enemies to the high form of prerogative which the king was assuming, and were very averse to popery. They generally were of a mind as to accepting the king's favour, but were not inclined to take the papists into a full toleration; much less could they be prevailed on to concur in taking off the tests. The Anabaptists were generally men of virtue and of universal charity; and as they were far from being on any

Declaration of Toleration.

treating terms with the church of England, so nothing but a universal toleration could make them capable of favour or employment. The Quakers had set up such a visible distinction in the matter of the *hat*, and saying *thou* and *thee*, that they had all as it were a badge fixed upon them, so that they were easily known. Among these, Penn had the greatest credit, as he had free access at court. To all these it was proposed that the king intended to settle the minds of the different parties in the nation, and to enrich it by enacting a perpetual law that should be passed with such solemnities as had accompanied the Magna Charta; so that not only penal laws should be for ever repealed, but that public employments should be opened to men of all persuasions, without any oaths limiting them to one sort or party of men. There were many meetings among the leading men of the several sects.”*

In April 1687, the king published a declaration of toleration, and indulgence of liberty of conscience to all persons dissenting from the church of England. “His majesty now made the cruelty of the church (says Burnet) the common subject of discourse. He reproached them for setting on foot so often a violent persecution of the dissenters. He said, he had intended to have set on this toleration sooner, but that he was restrained by some of them who had treated with him; and had undertaken to show favour to those of his religion, provided they might be still suffered to vex the dissenters. He named the persons who had made those propositions to him in which he suffered much in his honour: for as the persons denied the whole thing, so the freedom of discourse in any such treaty ought not to have been made use of to defame them.”†

* Burnets History, vol. ii. p. 702.

† Ibid. vol. ii. p. 715,

Baptists address the King.

“ Upon this (adds the bishop) a new set of addresses went round to the dissenters; and they who had so long reproached the church of England as too courtly in their submissions and flatteries, seemed now to vie with them in these abject strains. Few however concurred in these addresses, and the persons who brought them up were mean and inconsiderable; yet the court was lifted up with it. The king and his priests were delighted with these addresses out of measure: they seemed to think that they had gained the nation, and had now conquered those who were hitherto their most irreconcilable enemies.”

Some of the Baptists in London were delighted with this declaration of indulgence, and caught greedily at the bait without discerning the hook. It must however be acknowledged that liberty of conscience upon any terms could not fail to be grateful to persons who had been so long and so cruelly oppressed. The address they presented to the king contains some strong expressions: they say, “ It is the sense of this invaluable favour and benefit derived to us from your royal clemency that compels us once more to prostrate ourselves at your majesty’s feet with the tender of our most humble thanks for peace and liberty. Such demonstrations as these of your majesty’s tender care of the prosperity and quiet of your peaceable subjects will absolutely command the hearts of them all.”

This address was presented on Thursday, March 23, 1687, by Mr. Coxe, and four or five more of that society, through the Earl of Sunderland.

From this statement it appears that the body of the Baptists were not implicated in the address, nor even all of that denomination in London, as might have been concluded from the account given of it by Neal; who, on mentioning

Liberty parted them.

this circumstance, speaks of “the London Anabaptists in general.” This mistake was neither common to them as a body, nor peculiar to them as Baptists, for some of all the demominatians manifested the same folly of tacitly acknowledging a power in the king which he did not possess, and which tended to encourage a system of government that might afterwards have been employed to their destruction, if circumstances had not prevented.

The dissenting ministers in general, though they did not join in these addresses to the king, yet seem to have gladly availed themselves of this indulgence, and to have made use of the liberty it afforded them of worshipping God. “The Baptists,” it is said in a manuscript before me, “have returned to their *great meeting places*, and taken others as large as they can procure.” How many great meeting places they had at this time is not known; but that in Devonshire Square, which is now occupied by the congregation of Mr. Timothy Thomas, had been opened the year before. In the same M. S. it is said, “Tuesday, March 1, 1686, Mr. Kiffin opened his meeting place; and he and others preached at it, and psalms were sung there. At this time also the Baptists in the city in general had procured licences, and kept public and numerous meetings.”

As a considerable degree of odium has attached to those who fell in with the dispensing power which the king assumed, it seems desirable that this matter should be set in a fair point of view. That the Baptists in London were divided in opinion on this matter we have asserted and are happy to have it in our power to prove it. In the M. S. of Mr. William Kiffin we find the following statement. After having concluded the account of his grandsons, he adds, “This great storm being over it did in a great measure effect that

Mr. Kiffin's Account.

which was intended by them; for although now there appeared no difficulty in the way, but popery might be set up, and that there would be little or no stop to that design, means were used with the members of the house of commons to promise upon the sitting in parliament, to take off the Parliament Tests, which was the only hinderance to Roman catholics being chosen parliament men. They did generally refuse the making any such promise, and the insolency of the papists in their meetings, which now began to be more and more public, did so much alarm both the ministers of the church of England and also all true Protestants in general, that the interest of popery rather abated, and dissatisfactions grew.

“Therefore a new project was set on foot to engage the Protestant Dissenters, by giving them the liberty of their meetings, and promising them equal authority in the nation with other men; but this was in the tail of it to engage them thereby to promote the taking off the Test, and to strengthen the papist interest by setting the Protestant Dissenters against the Protestants of the church of England. This plot being carried on with all diligence, took with several dissenters, but indeed they were but few, and for the generality, of the meaner sort, William Penn being indeed the head of that party. I thought it my duty (adds Mr. Kiffin) to do all I could to prevent those dissenters of my acquaintance from having any hand therein. But from the sense they had of their former sufferings, and the hopes of finding all things as was promised, I could not prevail.”

We are at a loss to account for Mr. Kiffin's declaration that the persons who presented this address were of the meaner sort; when it is recollected that Dr. Coxe, Mr. William Collins, Mr. Thomas Plant, Mr. Benjamin Dennis, and others,

Liberty of Conscience.

who were among them, were certainly persons of great respectability. It is probable however that they were but few, compared with those who objected to the measure. From their established reputation, however, we must give them full credit for the purity of their intentions: no doubt but they thought that the parliament would confirm the king's declaration. However this was, it is certainly proper they should be heard in their own defence. In a work entitled, *The mischief of persecution*, published in 1688, by Mr. Plant and Mr. Dennis, they say, "Since his gracious majesty, by the goodness of God, had published his royal declaration, for *liberty of conscience*, and upon such grounds and reasons as we conceive are unanswerable, outdoing all kings and princes, not only in the fact of his clemency, but in the reason of it: and as it is that which will be to his immortal honour, so we hope, that it will have that perfection by law, that may for ever deliver this nation from the convulsions and evils it has laboured under in former years, and render us so happy, as not any more so much as to dispute, whether persecution be agreeable to the divine law.

"We confess we most willingly fall in with his majesty's gracious designs, and shall to our utmost endeavour carry them on, not knowing a greater service we can be capable of rendering to God, to our prince, our country, our religion; we certainly believe, that if once we were on even grounds with our fellow subjects, it will be easy to let them see the goodness and benefit of *liberty of conscience*, and how just it is, that religion should be left to him who is the object of it, to correct the errors of men about it, and we have not only the authority of scriptures and right reason, but also the suffrage of his gracious majesty to this assertion.

City of London disfranchised.

“We conclude, humbly imploring the divine person and councils of the king, by whom we sit under our vine and fig-tree, and pray he may live to see the top stone of this glorious fabric of *liberty of conscience* laid, and that he and his people may long live to enjoy the blessings of it, and that piety to God, and that charity to men, which we believe are natural fruits of this liberty, may flourish in this king dom.”

The work from whence this is an extract, was published a few months before the glorious revolution; and bears on the title page the imprimatur of, we suppose, the king's licenser of the press, as follows:—[May 7, 1688. This may be printed. C. N.] Happily for the nation the prayers and designs of these good men to promote liberty of conscience were answered in a way which they little expected. The king lived to see the top stone of this glorious fabric laid, or at least to hear of it, when he was reduced to such circumstances, that he had no power to prevent it, nor to destroy it.

In August this year, the king resolved to change the magistracy in most of the cities. He began with London. He not only changed the court of aldermen, but the government of most of the companies of the city. Amongst the new aldermen we find the name of Mr. Kiffin, who is called in the list, “Captain Kiffin,” probably from his having been a captain of a merchant ship in his younger years. There is an interesting and affecting story related in reference to this affair, in Noble's history of Cromwell, which is as follows.

“Kiffin was personally known both to Charles and James; and when the latter of these princes, after having arbitrarily deprived the city of the old charters, determined to put many of the dissenters into the magistracy; under the rose he sent for Kiffin to attend him at court. When he went thither in

Mr. Kiffin's address to the King.

obedience to the king's commandment, he found many lords and gentlemen. The king immediately came up to him, and addressed him with all the little grace he was master of. He talked of his favour to the dissenters in the court style of this season, and concluded with telling Kiffin that he had put him down as an alderman in his new charter. 'Sire,' replied Kiffin, 'I am a very old man, and have withdrawn myself from all kind of business for some years past, and am incapable of doing any service in such an affair to your majesty in the city. Besides, Sire'——the old man went on, fixing his eyes steadfastly on the king, while the tears ran down his cheeks——'the death of my grandsons gave a wound to my heart which is still bleeding, and never will close but in the grave.'

"The king was deeply struck by the manner, the freedom, and the spirit of this unexpected rebuke. A total silence ensued, while the galled countenance of James seemed to shrink from the horrid remembrance. In a minute or two, however, he recovered himself enough to say, 'Mr. Kiffin, I shall find a balsam for that sore,' and he immediately turned about to a lord in waiting."*

Mr. Kiffin, from the humility which he appears to have constantly manifested, takes no notice of his waiting on the king, but the manner in which he relates this affair deserves a place in our work. "In a little time after (says Mr. Kiffin) a great temptation attended me, which was a commission from the king, to be one of the aldermen of the city of London; which as soon as I heard of it, I used all the means I could to be excused, both by some lords near the king, and also by Sir Nicholas Butler, and Mr. Penn, but all in vain. I was told that they knew I had an interest that would serve the king, and although they knew that my sufferings had been

* *Memoirs of Cromwell*, vol. ii. p. 463.

Appointed an Alderman.

very great, in cutting off my two grand children, and loosing their estates, yet it should be made up to me both in their estates, and also in what honour and advantage I could reasonably desire for myself.

“ But I thank the Lord those proffers were no snare to me. Being fully possessed in my judgment that the design was the total ruin of the protestant religion, which I hope I can say, was and is dearer to me than my life. I remained without accepting the office from the time I received the summons to take it, above six weeks, until the lord mayor, Sir John Peake, in court said, I ought to be sent to Newgate, and in a few days after, I understood it was intended to put me into the crown office, and to proceed with all severity against me. Which, when I heard, I went to the ablest council for advice, (one that is now a chief judge in the nation) and stating my case to him, he told me my danger was every way great, for if I accepted to be an alderman, I ran the hazard of five hundred pounds, and if I did not accept, as the judges then were, I might be fined by them ten, or twenty, or thirty thousand pounds, even what they pleased. So that I thought it better for me to run the lesser hazard of £500 which was certain, than be exposed to such fines as might be the ruin of myself and family. Yet did I forbear taking the place of alderman for some time, when the aldermen then sitting agreed to invite the king to dinner on the lord mayor's day, and laid down fifty pounds each alderman to defray the charge; which made some of them the more earnest for my holding, and they were pleased to tell me I did forbear to excuse my fifty pounds! But to prevent any such charge against me, I desired a friend to acquaint my lord mayor and the court, that I should deposit my £50 with them; yet delaying accepting the office, which I accordingly

Advances towards Popery.

sent them. When the lord mayor's day came, and the dinner prepared for the king, I the next day understood, that there were invited to the feast the Pope's Nuncio, and several other priests that dined with them, which had I known they had been invited I should hardly have parted with my £50 towards that feast; but the next court day I came to the court, and took upon me the office of alderman. In the commission I was also a justice of the peace and one of the lieutenancy; but I never meddled with either of those places, neither in any act of power in that court, touching causes between man and man, but only such things as concerned the welfare of the city, and good of the orphans, whose distressed condition called for help, although we were able to do little towards it. We had frequently orders from the king to send to the several companies to put out great numbers of livery men out of the privilege of being livery men, and others to be put in their rooms; most of which that were so turned out were protestants of the church of England. There has been a list of 700 at a time to be discharged although no crime laid to their charge; that all men might see to what a deplorable state this city was like to be in, had not the Lord by an eminent hand of providence prevented; for hearing of the preparations making by the Prince of Orange, the several charters to the companies were again restored to their former liberties."

From these hints of Mr. Kiffin respecting the favour shown to dissenters, and the opposition made to the episcopalians, it is very evident that had they been so disposed, they had it in their power to have distressed the church party.—“And it may be (says Neal) they could have turned the scale against them, if they had given way to revenge, and fallen in heartily with the king's measure. They were strongly tempted on

Glorious Revolution.

all sides. The king preferred them to places of profit and trust, and gave them all manner of countenance and encouragement, while the churchmen loaded them with promises of what great things they would do for them as soon as it was in their power. But alas, no sooner was the danger over than the majority of them forgot their vows in distress."

The next year was a memorable one for England, and especially to the protestant dissenters, who were by the events which occurred, delivered from all the misery and oppression they had so long endured. On November the 5th, the Prince of Orange landed at Torbay; and in a very little time the body of the nation discovered their inclination so evidently, that the king lost both head and heart at once. The city of London was in confusion. Reports were spread that the Irish would cut all the throats of the protestants all over the nation in one and the same night, which awakened the fears of the people, and put them all night upon their guard. When this fright was over, the mob rose and pulled down the popish mass-houses, and burned the materials in the streets. Father Petre, with the priests and jesuits who had swarmed about the court, disappeared, and retired into foreign parts, and several of the king's arbitrary ministers absconded. *Jefferies* was taken at Wapping in a sailor's habit, and would have been torn in pieces by the mob, if he had not been conducted by a strong guard to the tower, where he died before he came to his trial. Soon after, the tyrant James being left almost alone, departed the kingdom, and fled to France. The throne was declared abdicated; and on February 13, 1688—9, William and Mary were proclaimed king and queen of England, to the joy of the nation.

One of the first measures of government was to pass the *Act of Toleration*, the Magna Charta of the Protestant

Act of Toleration.

Dissenters, by which they were relieved from all pains and penalties for separating from the church of England. Thus a stable foundation was laid for the preservation of their liberties, and an effectual restraint imposed upon their enemies, who wished to destroy their privileges.

Liberty being thus afforded to all denominations of dissenters, the Baptists seem to have taken immediate steps to improve their privileges by enquiring into the state of the churches, and to have adopted means to promote their prosperity. To convene a general meeting of the Particular Baptist churches, a circular letter was sent, signed by some of the London ministers. The following is a copy of that sent to the church at Luppitt, in Devonshire, the place where the present church at Upottery then met.

London, July 22, 1689.

“To the Church of Christ in Luppitt, kind Salutations.

“WE the elders and ministering brethren of the churches in and about London, being several times assembled together to consider of the present state of the baptized congregations, not only in this city, but also in the country, cannot but first of all, adore the divine wisdom and goodness of Almighty God, in respect of his late most gracious providence, for our deliverance from that dismal dispensation, which threatened us from the continual and unwearied attempts and designs of the enemy of our sacred religion and civil liberties; by which means our sinking and drooping spirits are again revived, and our earnest hopes and long expectations raised, and afresh quickened, in respect of the more full and perfect deliverance of the church of God, and his more glorious appearance, for the accomplishing of those gracious promises and prophecies contained in the holy scripture relating to the latter days.

Baptists call an Assembly.

“ But, in the second place, we cannot but bewail the present condition our churches seem to be in; fearing that much of that former strength, life, and vigour, which attended us is much gone; and in many places the interest of our Lord Jesus Christ seems to be much neglected which is in our hands, and the congregations to languish, and our beauty to fade away (which thing, we have some ground to judge, you cannot but be sensible of as well as we); and from hence we have been put upon most mature and serious considerations of such things that may be the cause thereof, and amongst others are come to this result: That the great neglect of the present ministry is one thing, together with that general unconcernedness there generally seems to be, of giving fit and proper encouragement for the raising up an able and honourable ministry for the time to come; with many other things which, we hope, we are not left wholly in the dark about, which we find we are not in a capacity to prevent and cure (as instruments in the hand of God, and his blessing attending our christian endeavours) unless we can obtain a general meeting here in London of two principal brethren (of every church of the same faith with us) in every county respectively. We do therefore humbly intreat and beseech you, that you would be pleased to appoint two of your brethren—one of the ministry, and one principal brother of your congregation with him—as your messengers; and send them up to meet with the rest of the elders and and brethren of the churches in London, on the 3rd of September next; and then we hope we shall have that before us, and be also helped to consider such things that may much tend to the honour of God, and further the peace, well-being, establishment at present, as also the future comfort of the churches. We hope you will readily, notwith-

Effect produced.

standing the charge, comply with our pious and christian desire herein; and in the mean time, to signify your intentions forthwith in a letter; which we would have you direct to our reverend and well beloved brethren, Mr. H. Knowles, or Mr. W. Kiffin. This is all at present from us, your brethren and labourers in God's vineyard, who greet you well in our Lord Jesus Christ, and subscribe ourselves your servants in the gospel.

"WILLIAM KIFFIN,

BENJAMIN KEACH,

HANSARD KNOLLYS,

EDWARD MAN,

JOHN HARRIS,

RICHARD ADAMS."

GEORGE BARRETT,

"Brother Kiffin lives in White's alley, Little Moorfields.*

This letter was attended with considerable effect. The ministers, or messengers, of more than a hundred churches assembled at the time proposed. The meetings, which were continued for eight or nine days, were peculiarly solemn and interesting; and the business transacted was of real importance to the welfare and prosperity of the churches. The greatest order and unanimity was preserved, as they all appear to have been animated and governed by the apostolic injunction, "Let us therefore follow after the things that make for peace; and the things wherewith one may edify another."

The transactions of this Assembly are related by themselves in a pamphlet entitled, *The Narrative of the Proceedings of the General Assembly of Divers Pastors, Messengers, and ministering Brethren, of the Baptized Churches, met together in London, from September 3,—12, 1689, from divers*

* Baptist Register for 1695, p. 260.

General Epistle.

parts of England and Wales; owning the doctrine of personal election and final perseverance; sent from, and concerned for, more than one hundred congregations of the same faith with themselves..

The General Epistle to the Churches.

UNTO THE CHURCH OF GOD, MEETING IN ——— SEND GREETING.

Beloved in our Lord Jesus Christ!

IT doth not a little affect our souls, to see how ready you were to comply with that Christian and pious invitation you had, to send one or two worthy brethren, as your messengers, to meet with the rest of us in this great assembly; for which we return you our hearty thanks: hoping, that not only we, and the churches of the saints to whom we are related, at this present time will have cause to bless, praise, and magnify the Father of mercies, and God of all comfort and consolation upon this account; but that the ages to come may have some grounds to rejoice and praise his holy name, through a divine blessing upon our consultations. Our endeavours in this assembly were chiefly to consider of the present state and condition of all the congregations respectively under our care and charge; and what might be the causes of the spiritual decay, and loss of strength, beauty and glory, in our churches: and to see (if we might be helped by the Lord herein) what might be done to attain to a better and more prosperous state and condition.

And now, brethren, in the first place, with no little joy we declare unto you how good and gracious the Lord has been to us, in uniting our hearts together in the spirit of love, and sweet concord in our debates, consultations, and resolves,

Continued.

which are sent unto you; there being scarcely one brother who dissented from the assembly in the sentiments of his mind, in any one thing we have proposed to your serious considerations, either in respect of the cause of our witherings, or what we have fixed on as a means of recovery to a better state, if the Lord will.

And therefore, in the second place, be it known unto you, that we all see great cause to rejoice and bless God, that after so dismal an hour of sorrow and persecution, in which the enemy doubtless designed to break our churches to pieces, and not only us, but to make the whole Sion of God desolate, even so as she might become as a plowed field; the Lord was pleased to give such strength and power in the time of need, to bear up your souls in your testimony for Jesus Christ, that your spirits did not faint under your burdens in the time of your adversity; so that we hope we may say, in the words of the church of old, *Though all this is come upon us, yet we have not forgotten thee, neither have we dealt falsely in thy covenant. Our heart is not turned back, neither have our steps declined from thy way. Though thou hast sore broken us in the place of dragons, and covered us with the shadow of death,* Psal. xliv. 17, 18, 19. Yet nevertheless we fear Christ may say, *I have somewhat against you, because you have left your first love,* as he once charged the church of Ephesus, and may possibly most churches in England; it is therefore good to consider from whence we are fallen, and repent and do our first works, Rev. ii. 5.

We are persuaded one chief cause of our decay is want of holy zeal for God, and the house of our God; few amongst us living up, we fear, to what they profess of God, nor answering the terms of that sacred covenant they have made with him; the power of godliness being greatly

Continued.

decayed, and but little more than the form thereof remaining amongst us. The thoughts of which are enough to melt our spirits, and break our hearts to pieces, considering those most amazing providences of the ever blessed God under which we have been, and more especially now are exercised, and the many signal and most endearing obligations he is pleased to lay us under. The spirit of this world, we clearly discern, has got too, too much into the hearts of most Christians and members of our churches, all seeking their own, and none, or very few, the things of Jesus Christ; if, therefore, in this there be no reformation, the whole interest of the blessed Lord Jesus will still sink in our hands, and our churches will be left to languish, whilst the hands of poor ministers become as weak as water, and sorrow and grief seize upon their spirits.

Thirdly, We cannot but bewail that great evil, and neglect of duty in many churches concerning the ministry.

1. In that some, though they have brethren competently qualified for the office of pastors and deacons, yet omit that sacred ordinance of ordination, whereby they are rendered incapable of preaching and administering the ordinances of the gospel so regularly, and with that authority which otherwise they might do. Those who have failed herein, we desire would, in the fear of God, lay it to heart and reform.

2. In neglecting to make [due] gospel-provision for their maintenance, according to their abilities; by which means many of them are so incumbered with worldly affairs, that they are not able to perform the duties of their holy calling, in preaching the gospel, and watching over their respective flocks.

Fourthly, We find cause to mourn, that the Lord's day is not more religiously and carefully observed, both in a con-

Continued.

stant attendance on the word of God in that church to which members do belong, and when the public worship is over, by a waiting on the Lord in family duties, and private devotion.

But because we have sent unto you the whole result of this great assembly particularly, we shall forbear to enlarge further upon these causes of our withering and decays.

One thing you will find we have had before us, and come to a resolve about, which we are persuaded will prove an exceeding great blessing and advantage to the interest of Jesus Christ in our hands; and if the Lord enlarge all our hearts, give a revival to the sinking spirits of the mourners in Sion, and to languishing churches too, which is that of a general or public stock or fund of money to be raised forthwith. First, by a free-will offering to the Lord: and secondly, by a subscription, every one declaring what he is willing to give, weekly, monthly, or quarterly to it.

And now, brethren, we must say, the Lord is about to try you in another way, than ever you have been tried to this day, because till now no such thing was settled amongst us, and so not propounded to you. It will be known now, whether you do love Jesus Christ, and his blessed interest, gospel and church, or no; whether you love him more than son or daughter. Oh that you would at this time shew your zeal for God, and let all men see the world is not so in your hearts, but that Jesus Christ hath much room there: 'Tis to be given towards God's holy temple, to build up his spiritual house, which hath a long time lain as waste. Remember how willingly the Lord's people offered upon this account formerly; 'tis some great as well as good thing the Lord, and we his poor and unworthy servants and ministers, do expect from you. God has wrought a great work for us; Oh let us make some suitable return of duty to him, and act like a

Continued.

people called, loved, and saved by him. Shall so much be spent needlessly on your own ceiled houses, on costly attire and dresses, and delicious diet, when God's house lies almost waste? We are therefore become humble supplicants for our dear Master, and could entreat you on our bended knees, with tears in our eyes, to pity Sion, if it might but move your heart to Christians bounty and zeal for her and the Lord of Hosts. We fear God did let in the enemy upon us, to consume us, and waste our substance, because to this day we have withheld it from him, when his cause, gospel, and churches, called for more than ever yet you parted with; and that a blast has been upon our trades and estates, for our remissness in this matter. May we not say, *Ye looked for much, and lo, it came to little; and when ye brought it home the Lord did blow upon it!* Why, because, saith God, *of mine house that is waste, and ye run every one to his own house.* Hag. i. 9. But if now we reform our doings, and shew our zeal for Christ and his gospel, and love to him, and act as becomes a willing people professing his name, you will see you will be no losers by it; *For I will, saith the Lord, open the windows of heaven, and pour out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it.* Mal. iii. 10. If the worth of souls, the honour of God, the good of the church, the glorious promulgation of the gospel in the nation, the credit of your profession, your own peace, and the weight of eternal glory be upon your spirits, we doubt not but you will give evidence of it at this time; and so shall you *build the old waste places, and raise up the foundations of many generations, and be the repairers of the breaches, and restorers of paths to dwell in.* Isa. lviii. 12.

We, to these great and good ends, have thought upon and appointed a solemn day to fast and mourn before the Lord,

General Fast.

and to humble ourselves, and seek his face, that a blessing may attend all that we have done, and you with us may yet further do for his holy name's sake.

A general Fast appointed in all the Congregations on the 10th of October next, 1689, with all the causes and reasons thereof:

The main and principal evils to be bewailed and mourned over before the Lord on that day, are as follow:

First, Those many grievous backslidings, sins, and provocations, not only of the whole nation, but also of the Lord's own people, as considered in our public and private stations; particularly that great decay of first love, faith and zeal for the ways and worship of God; which hath been apparent, not only in our churches, but also in private families.

Secondly, That this declension and backsliding hath been, we fear, for a long series of time, and many sore judgments God has brought upon the nation; and a strange death of late come upon the Lord's faithful witnesses, besides divers painful labourers in Christ's vineyard called home, and but few raised up in their stead; little success in the ministry; storms of persecution having been raised upon us, a new war commenced by the beast, (through the divine permission of God, and hand of his justice,) to a total overcoming, to appearance, the witnesses of Christ in these isles; besides his more immediate strokes by plague and fire, &c. God blasting all essays used for deliverance, so that we were almost without hope; therefore, our sins that provoked the righteous and just God to bring all these evils upon us, we ought to bewail and moan for before him. But withal not to forget his infinite goodness, who, when he saw that our power was gone, and that there was none shut up or left, that he should

Reasons for it.

thus appear for our help and deliverance, in a way unexpected and unthought of by us.

Thirdly, The things we should therefore in the next place pray and cry to the Lord for, are, that he would give us true, broken, and penitent hearts, for all our iniquities, and the sins of his people, and wash and cleanse away those great pollutions with which we have been defiled; and also pour forth more of his Spirit upon us, and open the mysteries of his word, that we may understand whereabouts we are, in respect of the latter time, and what he is doing, and know our work, and that a blessing may attend all the churches of his saints in these nations, and that greater light may break forth, and the glory of the Lord rise upon us, and that the word may not any more be as a miscarrying womb and dry breasts, but that in every place multitudes may be turned to the Lord, and that love and sweet concord may be found among all the Lord's people in these nations, that the great work begun therein so unexpectedly, may go on and be perfected to the praise of his own glory.

Likewise to put up earnest cries and supplications to the Lord for the lineal seed of Abraham, the poor Jews, that they may be called, and both Jews and Gentiles be made one sheepfold, under that one shepherd Jesus Christ.

These are some of the things we have thought good to lay before you, and which we hope we shall be helped with you to spread before the Lord on that day, with whatsoever else you or we may be helped to consider of; hoping you will not forget your pastors and ministers in your prayers, and what we have been enabled to come to a resolve about, so that all may be succeeded with a glorious blessing from the Almighty; that the present churches, and those saints who shall come after us, may have cause to praise his holy name:

Narrative of the proceedings.

Which is the unfeigned prayer and desire of us, who subscribe ourselves your servants for Jesus' sake.

HANSARD KNOLLYS,	RICHARD TIDMARSH,
WILLIAM KIFFIN,	JAMES WEBB,
ANDREW GIFFORD,	JOHN HARRIS,
ROBERT STEED,	THOMAS WINNELL,
THOMAS VAUXE,	JAMES HITT,
WILLIAM COLLINS,	HERCULES COLLINS,
JOHN TOMKINS,	RICHARD SUTTON,
TOBY WILLES	ROBERT KNIGHT,
GEORGE BARRETTE,	LEONARD HARRISON
BENJAMIN KEACH,	EDWARD PRICE,
DANIEL FINCH,	WILLIAM PHIPS,
JOHN CARTER,	WILLIAM FACEY,
SAMUEL BUTTALL,	JOHN BALL,
ISAAC LAMB,	WILLIAM HANKINS,
CHRISTOPHER PRICE,	SAMUEL EWER,
ROBERT KEATE,	PAUL FRUIN,

In the name and behalf of the whole assembly.

Memorand. 'Tis agreed to by us, that the next general assembly be held at London, on that day which is called Whitsun-Monday, 1690.

The Narrative of the Proceedings, &c.

WHEREAS we the Pastors and Elders of the several churches in and about London, did meet together, and seriously take into our consideration the particular states of the baptized churches among ourselves; and after a long persecution, finding the churches generally under great decays in the power of godliness, and defects of gifts for the ministry;

Narrative.

also, fearing that the same decays and defects might be among the churches of the same faith and profession throughout England and Wales, many of their ministers being deceased, many have ended their days in prison, many scattered by persecution to other parts, far distant from the churches to which they did belong: from a due sense of these things did, by a letter dated July 28, 1689, write to all the aforesaid churches throughout England and Wales, to send their messengers to a general meeting at London, the third of the seventh month, 1689. And being met together, the first day was spent in humbling ourselves before the Lord, and to seek of him a right way, to direct into the best means and method to repair our breaches, and to recover ourselves into our former order, beauty, and glory. In prosecution thereof, upon the fourth day of the same month, we, the Elders, ministering Brethren, and Messengers of the churches in and about London; and Elders, ministering Brethren, and Messengers of the several churches from several parts of England and Wales, hereafter mentioned; being again come together, after first solemnly seeking the Lord by prayer, did conclude upon these following preliminaries, and lay them down as the foundation of this our assembly, and rules for our proceedings; wherein all the messengers of the churches aforesaid, in city and country, as well for the satisfaction of every particular church, as also to prevent all mistakes, misapprehensions and inconveniencies that might arise in time to come concerning this general assembly, do solemnly and unanimously profess and declare:

1. That we disclaim all manner of superiority and superintendency over the churches, and that we have no authority or power to prescribe or impose any thing upon the faith or practice of any of the churches of Christ. Our whole in-

Questions proposed

tendment is to be helpers together of one another, by way of counsel and advice, in the right understanding of that perfect rule which our Lord Jesus, the Bishop of our souls, hath already prescribed, and given to his churches in his word, and therefore do severally and jointly agree,

2. That in those things wherein one church differs from another church in their principles or practices, in point of communion, that we cannot, shall not impose upon any particular church therein, but leave every church to their own liberty to walk together as they have received from the Lord.

3. That if any particular offence doth arise betwixt one church and another, or betwixt one particular person and another, no offence shall be admitted to be debated among us, till the rule Christ hath given, in this matter, be first answered, and the consent of both parties had, or sufficiently endeavoured.

4. That whatever is determined by us in any case, shall not be binding on any one church, till the consent of that church be first had, and they conclude the same among themselves.

5. That all things we offer by way of counsel and advice, be proved out of the word of God, and the scriptures annexed.

6. That the breviates of this meeting be transcribed, and sent to every particular church with a letter.

7. That the messengers that come to this meeting, be recommended by a letter from the church to which they belong, and that none be admitted to speak in this assembly, unless by general consent.

The letters from several churches being read, the meeting was dismissed till next day, and concluded in prayer.

and resolved.

September 5, 1689.

After solemn seeking the Lord, all the Elders, ministring Brethren, and Messengers aforesaid, considered, debated, and concluded, that a public fund or stock was necessary, and came to a resolve in these three questions: 1. How to raise it? 2. To what uses it should be disposed of? 3. How to secure it?

Q. 1. How or by what means this public fund or stock should be raised? Resolved,

1. That it should be raised by a free-will offering. That every person should communicate, for the uses hereafter mentioned, according to his ability, and as the Lord shall make him willing and enlarge his heart; and that the churches severally among themselves do order the collection of it with all convenient speed, that the ends proposed may be put into present practice.

2. That for the constant carying it on, there be an annual collection made in the several churches, of a half-penny, penny, two-pence, three-pence, four-pence, six-pence per week, more or less, as every person shall be willing; and that every congregation do agree among themselves to collect it, either weekly, monthly, or quarterly, according to their own convenience; and that ministers be desired to shew a good example herein. Exod. xxxv. 4, 5. 1 Cron. xxix. 14. Mal. iii. 10. Hag. i. 9. 2 Cor. viii. 11, 12.

3. That every particular church do appoint their deacons, or any other faithful brethren, to collect, and to acquaint the church with the sum collected, and remit it quarterly into the hands of such persons as are hereafter nominated and appointed to receive it at London; the first quarterly payment to be made on the 5th of December next.

4. That the persons appointed to receive all the aforesaid

Questions proposed

collections, be our honoured and well-beloved brethren, whose names we have sent you in a printed paper by itself, all living in and about London; and when any of these aforesaid brethren die, then the major part of the survivors of them shall nominate and appoint another brother in his stead, to be confirmed or refused at the next general meeting of this assembly. And that the said nine brethren shall disburse it from time to time for the uses hereafter mentioned, according to the satisfaction they, or the major part of them, shall have from the information and testimony of any two churches in this assembly, or from the testimony of any particular association of churches in the country, or from the satisfaction they shall have by any other means whatsoever.

Q. 2. To what uses this fund or public stock shall be disposed of? Resolved,

1. To communicate thereof to those churches that are not able to maintain their own ministry, and that their ministers may be encouraged wholly to devote themselves to the great work of preaching the gospel.

2. To send ministers that are ordained, or at least solemnly called to preach, both in city and country, where the gospel hath, or hath not yet been preached, and to visit the churches: and these to be chosen out of the churches in London, or in the country; which ministers are to be approved of, and sent forth by two churches at the least, but more if it may be.

3. To assist those members that shall be found in any of the aforesaid churches that are disposed for study, have an inviting gift, and are sound in fundamentals, in attaining to the knowledge and understanding of the languages, Latin, Greek, and Hebrew. These members to be represented to the nine brethren in London, by any two of the churches that belong to this assembly.

and resolved.

Resolved, the money collected be returned, as is expressed in a printed paper before mentioned, to one of the nine brethren mentioned in the said paper.

Resolved and concluded, that every quarter of a year an account shall be taken by those nine brethren in London, nominated in the printed paper aforesaid, of all the receipts and disbursements belonging to this aforesaid fund or stock: and an account signed by them, or the major part of them shall be transmitted to one church in every county, and from that church be communicated to all the rest of the churches aforesaid within the same county with all convenient speed. The first account to be made, and sent the 5th of January next.

Resolved, that what charges soever the said nine brethren are at in the service of this assembly, shall be discharged out of the aforesaid stock.

The questions proposed from the several churches, debated, and resolved.

Q. Whether it be not expedient for churches that live near together, and consist of small numbers, and are not able to maintain their own ministry, to join together for the better and more comfortable support of their ministry, and better edification one of another.

A. Concluded in the affirmative.

Q. Whether it is not the duty of every church of Christ to maintain such ministers as are set apart by them, by allowing them a comfortable maintenance according to their ability?

A. Concluded in the affirmative, 1 Cor. ix. 9.—14. Gal. vi. 6.

Q. Whether every church ought not to endeavour not only to provide themselves with an able ministry for the preaching

Questions proposed

of the word, but also to set apart to office, and in a solemn manner ordain such as are duly qualified for the same?

A. Concluded in the affirmative. Acts xiv. 23. Titus i. 5.

Q. Whether baptized believers are not at liberty to hear any sober and pious men of the Independent and Presbyterian persuasions, when they have no opportunity to attend upon the preaching of the word in their own assembly, or have no other to preach unto them?

A. Concluded in the affirmative. Acts xviii. 24, 25, 26.

Q. Whether the continuing of gifted brethren many years upon trial for eldership, or any person for the office of a deacon, without ordaining them, although qualified for the same, be not an omission of an ordinance of God?

A. Concluded in the affirmative.

Q. What is the duty of church members when they are disposed to marry, with respect to their choice?

A. To observe the apostle's rule, to marry only in the Lord, 1 Cor. vii. 39.

Q. Whether when the church have agreed upon the keeping of one day, weekly, or monthly, besides the first day of the week to worship God, and perform the necessary services of the church, they may not charge such persons with evil that neglect such meetings, and lay them under reproof, unless such members can shew good cause for such their absence?

A. Concluded in the affirmative, Heb. x. 25.

Q. What is to be done with those persons that will not communicate to the necessary expences of the church whereof they are members, according to their ability?

A. Resolved, that upon clear proof, the persons so offending, as aforesaid, should be duly admonished; and if no reformation appears, the church ought to withdraw from them, Eph. v. 3. Matt. xxv. 42. 1 John iii. 17.

and resolved.

Q. What is to be done with those persons that withdraw themselves from the fellowship of that particular church whereof they are members, and join themselves to the communion of the national church?

A. To use all due means to reclaim them by instruction and admonition; and if not thereby reclaimed, to reject them. Matt. xviii. 17. Luke ix. 62. Heb. x. 38. Jude 19.

Resolved, that the like method to be taken with those that wholly forsake the fellowship of that congregation to which they have solemnly given up themselves.

Q. Whether believers were not actually reconciled to God, actually justified, and adopted, when Christ died?

A. That the reconciliation, justification, and adoption of believers, are infallibly secured by the gracious purpose of God, and merit of Jesus Christ. Yet none can be said to be actually reconciled, justified, or adopted, untill they are really implanted into Jesus Christ by faith; and so by virtue of this their union with him, have these fundamental benefits actually conveyed unto them. And this, we conceive, is fully evidenced, because the scripture attributes all these benefits to faith as the instrumental cause of them, Rom. iii. 25. v. 1, 11. Gal. iii. 26. And gives such representation of the state of the elect before faith, as is altogether inconsistent with an actual right in them. Eph. ii. 1, 2, 3, 12.

Q. Whether it be not necessary for the Elders, ministering Brethren, and Messengers of the churches to take into their serious consideration those excesses that are found among their members, men and women, with respect to their apparel?

A. In the affirmative—That it is a shame for men to wear long hair, or long perewigs, and epecially ministers, 1 Cor.

Questions proposed

xi. 14. or strange apparel, Zeph. i. 8. That the Lord re-
proves the daughters of Zion, for the bravery, haughtiness,
and pride of their attire, walking with stretched out necks,
wanton eyes, mincing as they go, Isa. iii. 16. As if they
affected tallness, as one observes upon their stretched-out
necks; though some in these times seem, by their high
dresses, to out-do them in that respect. The apostle Paul ex-
horts, in 1 Tim. ii. 9, 10, that *women adorn themselves in mo-
dest apparel, with shamefacedness and sobriety: not with broi-
dered hair, or gold, or pearls, or costly array; but with good
works, as becometh women professing godliness.* And 1 Pet.
iii. 3, 4, 5. *Whose adorning let it not be the outward adorning
of plaiting the hair, and of wearing of gold, or of putting on
of apparel; but the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which
is, in the sight of God, of great price: for after this (fashion,
or) manner, in old time, the holy women who trusted in God
adorned themselves.* And therefore, we cannot but bewail it
with much sorrow and grief of spirit, that those brethren and
sisters, who have solemnly professed to deny themselves,
Matt. xvi. 24, and who are by profession obliged in duty not
to conform to this world, Rom. xii. 2, should so much con-
form to the fashions of this world, and not reform themselves
in those inclinations that their natures addicted them to in
days of ignorance, 1 Pet. i. 14. From these considerations,
we earnestly desire that men and women whose souls are
committed to our charge, may be watched over in this matter,
and that care be taken, and all just and due means used, for
a reformation herein; and that such who are guilty of this
cying sin of pride, that abounds in the churches as well
as in the nation, may be reproved; especially considering
what time and treasure is foolishly wasted in adorning the
body, which would be better spent in a careful endeavour to

and resolved.

adorn the soul ; and the charge laid out upon those superfluities, to relieve the necessities of the poor saints, and to promote the interest of Jesus Christ. And though we deny not but in some cases ornaments may be allowed, yet whatever ornaments in men or women are inconsistent with modesty, gravity, sobriety, and prove a scandal to religion, opening the mouths of the ungodly, ought to be cast off, being truly no ornaments to believers, but rather a defilement ; and that those ministers and churches who do not endeavour after a reformation herein, are justly to be blamed.

Q. Whether it be not the duty of all Christians, and churches of Christ, religiously to observe the Lord's day, or first day of the week, in the worship and service of God, both in public and private ?

A. It is concluded in the affirmative :—Because we find that day was set apart for the solemn worship of God, by our Lord Jesus, and his holy apostles, through the infallible inspiration of the Holy Spirit.

1st. Because it appears that the Son of God, who was manifested in the flesh, had authority to make a change of the solemn day of worship, being Lord of the Sabbath. Matt. xii. 8.

2dly. It is manifested that our blessed Lord and Saviour arose on that day, as having completed and confirmed the work of our redemption, Matt. xxviii. 1. Luke xxiv. 1. John xx. 1. whereby he laid the foundation of the observation of that day.

3dly. Our Lord Jesus did then, on that day most plainly and solemnly appear to his disciples, teaching and instructing them, blessing them, and giving them their commission, breathing on them the Holy Ghost. Luke xxiv. 13, 27, 36. John xx. 19—23.—Moreover on the next first day of the

Questions proposed

week, he appeared to them again, giving them a further infallible proof of his glorious resurrection: and then convinced the apostle Thomas, who was absent the first day before, but was now with them, John xx. 26. Whereby it appears he sanctified and confirmed the religious observation of that day by his own example.

4thly. Our Lord and Saviour remained with his disciples forty days after his resurrection, speaking to them of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God, Acts i. 3. And we question not but he then gave command about the observation of this day.

5thly. For a further confirmation hereof, it appears that after his ascension, when his disciples or apostles, were assembled together solemnly with one accord, on the day of Pentecost, which by all computation, was the first day of the week: recorded, Acts ii. 1, 2.—He then poured out his Holy Spirit in a marvellous and an abundant measure upon them.

6thly. Accordingly, afterwards, we find this day was solemnly observed by the churches, as appears, Acts xx. 7. where we have the churches assembling on that day plainly asserted, with the solemn duties then performed, which were preaching and breaking of bread; and all this recorded as their usual custom which could be from no other cause but divine and apostolic institution. And it is most remarkable, and worthy the most serious observation of all the Lord's people, that although the holy apostles, and others that were preachers of the gospel, took their opportunities to preach the word on the Jewish sabbath-day, and on other days of the week as they had convenient seasons afforded; yet we have no example of the churches then assembling together to celebrate all the ordinances of our Lord Jesus pe-

and resolved.

culiar to them, but on the first day of the week ; which manifest practice of theirs is evidently as plain a demonstration of its being a day set apart for religious worship, by the will and command of our Lord Jesus, as if it had been expressed in the plainest words. Forasmuch as they did nothing in those purest primitive times in the sacred worship of God, either as to time or form, but by a divine warrant from the holy apostles, who were instructed by our Lord Jesus, and were guided in all those affairs by his faithful and infallible Holy Spirit.

7thly. In like manner the solemn ordinance of collection for the necessities of the poor saints, was commanded to be performed on that day, 1 Cor. xvi. 1, 2. by an apostolic ordination ; which without question, by reason of their observing that day for their holy assembling and worship, was then required.

Lastly. It is asserted by all the considerate and able expositors of the holy scriptures, that the denomination or title of Lord's day, mentioned Rev. i. 10. was attributed to the first day of the week, as the usual distinguishing name given to that solemn day by the Christians, or churches, in the primitive times ; and as being a day to be spent wholly in the service and worship of the Lord, and not in our own worldly and secular affairs, which are lawful to be attended unto on other days of the week.

From all which, laid together and considered, we are convinced that it is our duty religiously to observe that holy day in the celebration of the worship of God.

Q. Whether the graces and gifts of the Holy Spirit be not sufficient to the making and continuing of an honourable ministry in the churches ?

A. Resolved in the affirmative, Eph. iv. 8, 9. 1 Cor. xii. 7.

Questions proposed

Q. Whether it be not advantageous for our brethren now in the ministry, or that may be in the ministry, to attain to a competent knowledge of the Hebrew, Greek, and Latin tongues, that they may be the better capable of defending the truth against opposers?

A. Resolved in the affirmative.

Q. Whether an elder of one church may administer the ordinance in other churches of the same faith?

A. That an elder of one church may administer the ordinance of the Lord's supper to another of the same faith, being called so to do by the said church; though not as their pastor, but as a minister, necessity only being considered in this case.

We the Ministers and Messengers of, and concerned for, upwards of one hundred baptized congregations in England and Wales, denying Arminianism, being met together in London from the third of the seventh month to the eleventh of the same, 1689, to consider of some things that might be for the glory of God, and the good of these congregations; have thought meet, for the satisfaction of all other Christians that differ from us in the point of Baptism, to recommend to their perusal the confession of our faith, which we own, as containing the doctrine of our faith and practice; and do desire that the members of our churches respectively do furnish themselves therewith.

Moreover, this assembly do declare their approbation of a certain little book, lately recommended by divers elders dwelling in and about the city of London, entitled, *The Ministers Maintenance vindicated*. And it is their request, that the said treatise be dispersed among all our respective congregations; and it is desired that some brethren of each church take care to dispose of the same accordingly.

and resolved.

The elders and messengers of the assembly, in consequence of illiberal aspersions cast upon their connections, concluded the narrative of 1689, declaring their abhorrence of the late king's absolute and dispensing power, as well as their united and most hearty determination "to venture their all for the protestant religion, and the liberties of their native country:" "And we do," say they, "with great thankfulness to God, acknowledge his special goodness to these nations, in raising up our present king William, to be a blessed instrument in his hand, to deliver us from popery and arbitrary power; and shall always, as in duty bound, pray that the Lord may continue him and his royal consort long to be a blessing to these kingdoms; and shall always be ready to the utmost of our ability, in our places, to join our hearts and hands, with the rest of our protestant brethren, for the preservation of the protestant religion, and the liberties of the nation.

WILLIAM KIFFIN,
HANSARD KNOLLYS,
ANDREW GIFFORD,
ROBERT STEED,
THOMAS VAUXE
JOHN TOMKINS,
TOBY WELLS,
GEORGE BARRETTE,
BENJAMIN KEACH,
SAMUEL BUTTALL,
ISAAC LAMB,
CHRISTOPHER PRICE,

ROBERT KEATE,
RICHARD TIDMARSH,
JAMES WEBB,
JOHN HARRIS,
THOMAS WINNELL,
JAMES HITT,
EDWARD PRICE,
WILLIAM PHIPS,
WILLIAM FACEY,
JOAN BALL,
WILLIAM HANKINS,
PAUL FRUIN."

The persons appointed to receive all the collections made in the respective congregations for the general fund or public

Trustees.

stock, are our honoured and well-beloved brethren, Mr. William Kiffin, Mr. Robert Bristow, Mr. Morice King, Mr. John Leader, sen. Mr. Isaac Marlow, Mr. John Skinner, Mr. Richard Hallowell, Mr. John Collet, and Mr. Edward Harrison.

Resolved, That the money be remitted from the country, to our beloved brother Mr. Edward Harrison, (one of the nine brethren before mentioned,) living at the sign of the Hen and Chickens, in Cheapside, London; with another letter signifying the same, to our beloved brother Mr. Morice King, living at the sign of the Mermaid in Lawrence Lane, Silkman, another of the nine brethren aforesaid.

We, whose names are subscribed, testify, that the persons aforenamed were unanimously chosen by the whole Assembly, September 12, 1689.

HANSARD KNOLLYS,

ROBERT STEED,

WILLIAM COLLINS,

ANDREW GIFFORD,

THOMAS VAUXE,

JOHN HARRIS,

BENJAMIN KEACH,

GEORGE BARRETTE,

SAMUEL BUTTALL,

CHRISTOPHER PRICE,

WILLIAM PRITCHARD,

WILLIAM HANKINS

EDMOND WHITE,

DANIEL FINCH,

JOHN TOMKINS,

EDWARD MANN,

JAMES WEBB,

THOMAS WINNELL,

RICHARD ADAMS,

WILLIAM PHIPS,

JOHN BALL,

RICHARD RING,

CHARLES ARCHER,

JAMES HITT,

HERCULES COLLINS,

LEONARD HARRISON,

EDWARD PRICE,

WILLIAM FACEY,

PAUL FRUIN,

RICHARD SUTTON,

ROBERT KEATE,

JOHN CARTER,

ROBERT KNIGHT.

List of Ministers and Messengers.

To preserve all the conciseness which is possible, we print the list which was published in 1692, with that for this year. The reader is desired to remark that those churches distinguished by an asterisk are Welsh Churches.

AN Account of the several Baptized Churches in England and Wales, owning the Doctrine of Personal Election and Final Perseverance, that sent either their Ministers or Messengers, or otherwise communicated their state in our General Assembly at London, on the 3d and 4th, and so on to the 11th day of the 7th month, called September, 1689.

The List of September, 1689.

The List of the 3d Month, 1692.

*Churches.**Ministers and Messengers.*

1689.

1692.

BERKSHIRE.

READING	William Facey, pastor Reyamire Griffin, mess.	Jo. Ward, min.
Farringdon	Richard Steed, min. William Mills, min.	Richard Steed min. William Mills, min.
Abington	Henry Forty, pastor John Tomkins Philip Hockton	John Tomkins, min.
Newberry		
Wantage	Robert Keate, min.	Robert Keate, min.
Longworth	John Man, preacher Peter Stephens	John Man, preacher

BEDFORDSHIRE.

Steventon	Step. Howtherne, past. John Carver	Step. Howtherne, past.
Evershall	Edward White, past.	Edmond White, pastor

Continued.

1689.

1692.

BUCKINGHAMSHIRE.

Haddington Peter Tyler

Peter Tyler

Stukely

Robert Knight, past.

Robert Knight, pastor

CAMBRIDGESHIRE.

Cambridge Thomas Cowlinge

Thomas Cowlinge

Wisbich

Wm. Ricks, preacher

Wm. Rix, preacher

CARDIGANSHIRE.

Glandwr*

CORNWALL.

Looe

Tho. Cowling, min.

Thomas Cowling, min.

DEVONSHIRE.

Bovey Tracey Clement Jackson, min.

Clement Jackson, min.

Dartmouth Philip Cary, min.

Philip Cary, min.

Exon

Wm. Phipps, pastor
Richard Adams

Mr. Sampson min.

Ladswell

Samuel Hart, min.

Samuel Hart, min.

Luppit

Thomas Halwell

Thomas Halwell

Plymouth

— Holdenby, past.
Samuel Buttall, min.

James Hitt, min.

Samuel Buttall, min.

South Molton Thos. Stoneman, mess.

Tiverton

John Ball
Tristram Truvin, min.

Richard Tidmarsh, min.

DORSETSHIRE.

Dorchester Thomas Cox, min.

Thomas Cox, min.

Continued.

1689.

1692.

Dalwood	James Hitt, preacher	
	Thos. Payne, preacher	Thomas Payne, min.
Lyme	Simon Orchard, min.	Simon Orchard, min.

DURHAM.

Muggleswick	John Ward	John Ward, min.
	Henry Blackhead	Henry Blackett, min.

ESSEX.

Hadfield- Braddock	Wm. Collins, pastor	Wm. Collins, past.
Harlow	Wm. Woodward, past. James Newton	Wm. Woodward, past.

Colchester is mentioned in 1692. John Hammond, past.

GLOUCESTERSHIRE.

Morton-in- marsh	John Goring, pastor Anthony Freeman	John Greening, past.
Cirencester	Giles Watkins, min.	Giles Watkins, min.
Dimmock	Wm. Hankins, past.	Wm. Hankins, pastor
Marring- Hampton		
Nimpsfield	Robert Williams	Robert Williams
Sedbury		
Tewkesbury	Eleaz. Herringe, past. Edward Canter	Eleazer Herringe, past.

GLAMORGANSHIRE.

Swansea*	Lewis Thomas, pas. Robert Morgan	Lewis Thomas, past.
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HERTFORDSHIRE.

Hempstead	Samuel Ewer, past. William Aldwin	Samuel Ewer, past.
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 Continued.

1689.

1692.

Kingsworth James Hardinge, min. James Hardinge, min.
 Daniel Finch, min. Daniel Finch, min.

Perton

Theobalds Jos. Masters, past. Joseph Masters, past.
 Joseph Seward

Tringe Richard Sutton, past. Richard Sutton, past.
 John Bishop

HAMPSHIRE.

Christ- Joseph Brown Joseph Brown
 Church John Lillington

Ringwood

SouthHamp- Richard Ring, past. Richard Ring, past.
 ton John Greenwood

Whitchurch Richard Kent, mess. Richard Kent, min.
 Stephen Kent, mess.

HEREFORDSHIRE.

Golchon*

Hereford Edward Price, past. Edward Price, past.

Weston and Rich. Perkins, preach. Rich. Perkins, preach.
 Pinnard

KENT.

Sandwich Thos. Fecknam, past. Thos. Fecknam, pastor
 Edward Taylor

LANCASHIRE.

Warrington ——— Loe, past. Thomas Loe, pastor

LEICESTERSHIRE.

Kilbey Hen. Coleman, past. Henry Coleman, min.
 Benjamin Winkles

Continued.

1689.

1692.

MIDDLESEX.

LONDON.

Broken Wharf	Hansard Knollys, past. Robert Steed, past. John Skinner Thomas Lampet	Robert Steed, past
Devonshire-Square	Wm. Kiffin, past. Morris King William Clark	William, Kiffin, past. Richard Adams, past.
Joyners Hall	John Harris, past. Samuel Boneal William Dicks John Merriot	Tobias Russel, min. Thomas Mariot, min.
Houndsditch	Edward Man, past. John Burkes Richard Hollowell	Edward Man, pastor
Petty France	Wm. Collins, past. John Collet Thomas Harrison	Wm. Collins, pastor Thomas Harrison, min.
Lime-house	Leon. Harrison, past. Samuel Booth John Hunt	Leonard Harrison, past.
Mile-end Green	George Barret, past. Isaac Marloe John Putipher Daniel Hawes	George Barret, pastor
Culman Green		<i>Culman Green, not inserted this year.</i>
Penington Street	Isaac Lambe, pastor Humph. Burroughs John Giller	Hum. Burroughs, mess.
Wapping	Hercul. Collins, past. Humph. Hutchings John Overinge	Hereules Collins, pastor

Continued.

1689.

1692.

SOUTHWARK

Horse-lie down	Benj. Keach, pastor John Leader Thomas Dawson Edward Sandford	Benj. Keach, pastor
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Mayes Pond		Sumuel Mee, minister
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Shad Thames	Richard Adams, min. Nath. Crabb John Bernard	Winchester House. Richard Baxter, min. David Towler, min. }
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MONMOUTHSHIRE.

Abergaven- ny	Chris. Price, min.	Christoph. Price, min.
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Blaenau*	Wm. Prichard, past.	William Prichard, past.
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Llanwe- narth*	Francis Giles	
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Glanhenock*

NORFOLK.

Pulham Market	Henry Bradshaw	Henry Brett, pastor
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Norwich	—Austin, pastor Thomas Flatman, min.	Edward Austin, pastor Edward Williams, past.
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NORTHUMBERLAND.

Newcastle- on-Tyne	Richard Pitts, pastor John Turner	Richard Pitts, pastor
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OXFORDSHIRE.

Finstock	John Carpenter, min. Joshua Brooks	John Carpenter, min.
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Hooknorton	Charles Archer, pastor	Charles Archer, pastor
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Oxford city	Richard Tidmarsh, min.	
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Continued.

1689.

1692.

PEMBROKESHIRE.

Neare, or	Griffith Howel	Griffith Howel
Rushacre*	William Jones, pastor	William Jones, pastor

SOMERSETSHIRE

Bath Hay-	Richard Gay, min.	Richard Gay, minister
comb		

Bridgwater	Tobias Wells, pastor	Tobias Wells, pastor
	Wm. Coleman	

BRISTOL.

Broadmead	Tho. Vaux, pastor	Thomas Vaux, pastor
	Robert Bodinam	

Fryers	Andrew Gifford, pastor	Andrew Gifford, pastor
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Chard	Wm. Wilkins, min.	Wm. Wilkins, min.
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Charton	Wm. Woodman	Wm. Woodman
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Dunster and		
Stockgomer		

Froome	Wm. Randalfe	
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Hallitraw	John Andrews	
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Hatch	Jeremiah Day	Jeremiah Day
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Kilmington	Robert Cox, min.	Robert Cox, minister
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Taunton	Thos. Winnell, pastor	Thos. Whinnell, pastor
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Wedmore	George Stant, min.	George Stant, minister
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Wells	Tim. Brooke, min.	Timothy Brooke, min.
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Yeoville	Thomas Miller, pastor	Thomas Miller, pastor
and Perriot		

SUFFOLK.

Framingsham	Thos. Mills, minister	Thomas Mills, minister
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Continued.

1689.

1692.

SURREY.

Guildford	John Ward	
Richmond	Hezekiah Brent, min.	
	John Scot, minister	John Scot, minister

WARWICKSHIRE.

Aulcester	John Willis	John Willis, min.
	John Higgins	(Copy falsely Wills)
Warwick	Paul Fruin, min.	Benjamin Boyer, min.
	Robert Paule	

WILTSHIRE.

Bradford	John Flouret	John Flouret
Calne		
Cley Chase		
Devizes	James Webb	
Ecclestocke	William Aldridge	
	Edward Froud	
Knoyle	John Williams, past.	John Williams, pastor
Malmesbury	—Arch, past.	—Arch, pastor
Melksham		
Porton	Walter Pen	
	John Andrews	
Southweeke	Joseph Holton	
	John Layes	
Warminster	John Werell, pastor	
Westbury	Roger Cator	

WORCESTERSHIRE.

Bromsgrove	John Eccles, past.	John Eccles, pastor
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General Assembly.

Hearty thanks are returned to you for your great love and charity towards our poor brother, Richard Dorwood, upon the account of his loss by fire."

The next meeting was held at the time appointed, viz. from June 9th to the 16th 1690, and a general epistle was addressed to the churches. This account we have not seen, nor have we been able to procure it. Part of the address was published in the Baptist Register some years since, but for some reason which is not mentioned, it was left unfinished.

There was also a meeting in the next year 1691, and the account of their proceedings was published under the title of *A Narrative of the general assembly of the elders and messengers of the Baptized churches, sent from divers parts of England and Wales, which began in London June 2, and ended on the 8th of the same month, 1691, Owning the doctrines of personal election and final perseverance.* The following is their general epistle to the churches.

"Dearly beloved Brethren,

THE God of all grace hath brought us into a near and spiritual relation to you, and you have such a rooted interest in our hearts, that through grace we shall always be ready to lay out ourselves to the utmost of our capacity to promote the eternal well-being and happiness of your souls. Our sighs, groans, and prayers in secret, and our labours in public in all the holy administrations of the house of God, are sincerely directed to that end. God is our witness, who hath called us out to this service, in pursuance of his own glory, and his gracious design towards you. And whereas you have freely chosen us as your messengers, and entrusted us with

Letter to the Churches.

power to consider, discourse about, and conclude upon those things proposed to us, in order to the general good of those churches to which we respectively belong, we have addressed ourselves to this work with earnest supplication to the Father of lights for his special assistance and direction therein: and we are not without some good assurance that he bowed his ear to us, in regard of that harmony and good agreement which was observable in most of our debates and conclusions. And though we can impose nothing upon you, yet hereby is derived a greater authority unto what was concluded, and it deserves to be so much the more regarded by you. We do heartily wish that you would look back to those things which you were formerly pressed and exhorted to in the two last assemblies of your messengers, for the promoting of the glory of God and your own good: and although we have not found the full end of our endeavours in all things answered, yet we bless God in many things we have, which gives us encouragement to hope that we may have some success in this; and we unfeignedly desire the thorough reformation, the happy settlement, and the firm peace and well-being of all those Christian churches we are immediately concerned with.

“ One thing formerly pressed upon you was a liberal contribution by a free-will offering, and quarterly subscriptions or collections, towards raising a public stock for ends and uses fully known to you. And we return you our hearty thanks for what you have already done, and doubt not but thereby fruit will abound to your account in the day of Christ; and we hope you will not grow weary in well-doing, having the promise of God that you shall then reap. Many things might be urged to quicken you in this good work whereby several labourers in the Lord’s vineyard have been

Address to the Churches.

already relieved, several pious and hopeful young men have been assisted in their acquirement of learning, and some have been sent forth to visit the churches, to give their helping hand in order to their settlement according to the rule of the gospel. But we hope that this disposal of your money according to your intention may render motives of that kind unnecessary. However, that we may not be wanting in a matter of this nature, wherein the honour of God, the keeping up his public worship in the world, the edification of churches, and the conversion of the residue of God's chosen is so much concerned, we shall humbly take the boldness to press you to a further progress therein; and the rather because several of our fellow-christians, who after us fall into this method, have far exceeded us. And why should not the glory of Christ and the advancement of his kingdom be as dear to us as to them? We hope it is, and therefore will not despair of prevailing with you.

“If any churches or members, on a review of what is past, shall be sensible of their own defect, we desire it may be made up, lest others should be discouraged, and the work in a little time cease. Things of this nature never prosper well without a free and cheerful concurrence of all conjointly concerned therein according to their ability; and should we find such a concurrence generally, it would be matter of great rejoicing to us, and be esteemed as a remarkable effect of the spirit of love which is diffused throughout all the members of Christ's mystical body.

“To further such a concurrence, let us consider—(1.) From whom we have received all that we enjoy, and what promises of future supplies we have through grace an interest in—(2.) That we are but stewards of what we have, and that God can by his secret and just providence soon take away

Associations.

our stewardship, if we are not found faithful therein—(3.) That the end of what we have is the honour of God. Prov. iii. 9—(4.) That the keeping up God's public worship, which is inclusive of all the ends proposed by this public stock, is a principal way of honouring God; and all other ways of expending what we have are inferior to this—(5.) That giving in this way will be a great evidence of the sincerity of our profession, and will be a great comfort in the latter end.—Other things of this nature might be added; but we hope that God's grace will carry you beyond all that our arguments can amount to, as was of old exemplified in the churches of Macedonia. 2 Cor. viii. 1, 2.

“In the next place, we would desire you who live in the country to send up your particular messengers to this general meeting, that we may have the more abundant evidence of your approbation of that good work intended and carried on therein; and let not the incident charges you are thereby exposed to be a discouragement to you, we being persuaded that our friends in the city, who are not liable to such charges, will make a compensation by a more liberal contributing to the public stock.

“To conclude: dear brethren, we commend you to God and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up and to give you an inheritance among all them who are sanctified; amongst whom we desire to be found, who subscribe ourselves your brethren in the faith and the fellowship of the gospel,

HANSARD KNOLLYS,

ROBERT STEED,

WILLIAM COLLINS,

ANDREW GIFFORD,

THOMAS VAUXE,

THOMAS WINNELL,

RICHARD ADAMS,

WILLIAM PHIPS,

JOHN BALL,

RICHARD RING,

Continued.

SAMUEL BUTTALL,
 GEORGE BARRETTE,
 JOHN WARD,
 NATHANIEL CRABB,

THOMAS WINNELL,
 THOMAS HARRISON
 JOHN BUTT.

June 8, 1691."

It appears that at this time the churches in the different parts of England and Wales had been formed into distinct associations. Of these we have the following account.

The association of the churches in London, Middlesex, Kent, and Essex.

Theobalds	Virginia street	Richmond
George Yard	Wapping	Turnham-green
Devonshire Square	Limehouse	Mayes-pond
Moorfields	Horsley-down	Sundwich
Joiners Hall	Winchester House	Hatfield-heath
Houndsditch	Mile-end	

The association of the churches in Somerset, Dorset, Wilts, Gloucestershire, and Bristol.

Taunton	Perriton-evil	Melksham
Bridgewater	Frome	Bradford
Croscomb	Sarum	Southwick
Hallatrow	Warminster	Malmesbury
Hay Combe	Sedghill	Ninfield
Hatch	Westbury	Sudbury
Kilmington	Devizes	Broadmead
Dunster	Calne	Fryers

The association of churches in Abingdon, &c.

Abingdon	Oxford	Maizey Hampton
Wantage	Farringdon	Cirencester
Longworth	Finstock	Reading

Continued.

The association of churches in Norfolk, Suffolk, &c.

Norwich	Sudbury	Debach
Pulham	Wisbeach	Colchester

The western association of churches.

Plymouth	South Molton	Dalwood
Looe	Tiverton	Lyme
Southams	Exon	Chard
Bovey	Luppit	

The association of churches in Newcastle, Yorkshire, Northumberland, and Cumberland.

Newcastle	Pontefract	Egremont
Bichbarn	Broughton	Woolverstone

Hampshire association.

Christchurch	Ringwood	Whitechurch	Southampton
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The association of churches in Hertfordshire, Buckinghamshire, and Bedfordshire.

Kensworth	Perton	Sutley	Tring
Eversholt	Hempstead	Harlow	

The association in Stepton and Haddenham.

Stepton, alias Steventon, and Haddenham.

The association in South Wales, Monmouthshire, and part of Herefordshire.

Langoven	Lanwenarth	Golchon	Llanvabon
Abergavenny	Blaen-y-wern	Creig-yr-allt	

Carmarthenshire association.

Ynys-vach	Rushacre	Lanydwr
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The Fund.

Association of churches in Worcestershire, Warwickshire, Oxfordshire, Leicestershire, and part of Herefordshire.

Broomsgrove	Hereford	Hook Norton
Warwick	Tewkesbury	Alcester
Dimock	Moreton in the Marsh	Kilby

The business attended to have related principally to the establishment of a general fund, for the assistance of poor churches, and for the encouragement of young men to apply themselves to the work of the ministry. To carry this into effect they say, “ We the said Elders and Messengers of the churches of Jesus Christ assembled together, having it under our consideration how much the name of God, the honour of the gospel, and the good of all the churches to which we belong are concerned in our perseverance in these good things resolved upon in our former general assemblies, do agree and resolve unanimously, for the better increase and continuance of the fund, to propound it to you and exhort all our churches and members, with all our Christian friends and well-wishers thereto, to a liberal and cheerful contribution as God hath blessed them in the good things of this life.”

“ 1. By bringing in their free-will offerings with all readiness of mind, as a sacrifice with which God is well pleased—2. By the continuance of their quarterly subscriptions, according as God shall bless them—3. By a liberal contribution quarterly, which we unanimously agree to promote in all our churches and assemblies, to this end that all whom God hath blessed with ability and a ready mind may have opportunity to shew their good will for promoting those great and good things for which this fund is raised; viz. the support of such ministers as the churches are not able to supply with what is necessary to their comfortable subsis-

Continued.

tence, so that they may be encouraged to take the better care of their own charge, and to preach the gospel where a door is open; and also godly young men, members of the churches whom God hath gifted, and are approved of, may be instructed in the knowledge of the tongues in which the holy scriptures were written.

“ And we judge it not reasonable that they who contribute nothing to the fund should desire any thing out of it. Therefore it is expected that those churches which are poor should make their collections for the uses aforesaid, and raise what they can, be it more or less. Moreover we judge that those who have subscribed either to the free-will offering or other contributions for the uses aforesaid, ought in conscience to perform what they have thereby engaged to do: for although, before it was their own, yet after their subscribing it remains so no longer. Acts v. 5. “ It is further agreed, that what is or shall be gathered by the free-will offerings not yet paid in, and what is collected or to be collected by subscription, as also what shall be gathered by the first public quarterly collection by all the churches in London and the country, shall be paid in by the twenty-ninth of September next, with a signification of what use or uses they design the money for.

“ For the better encouragement of this good work, it is agreed as follows—(1.) That the trustees put down the particular uses assigned to every particular sum as in the last narrative expressed—(2.) That the sums given to the same use be put together and kept in a distinct account by itself, by brother King and brother Harrison—(3.) That the money given to one use be not disposed of to another—Also that no money should be paid to or disbursed out of the fund but what is agreed on by this present assembly, until this assem-

The Fund altered.

bly shall by the good providence of God meet again in London in 1692."

The meeting appointed was held the next year in London, from May 3—24, when the associated churches consisted of a hundred and seven. To promote their unity and comfort it was thought expedient—" (1.) That whereas for some years past, the churches have had several associate and county meetings, and one general one in London annually, it is now proposed to divide this general meeting into two, and to keep one in the west and another in the east; that in the west to be at Bristol, and the other in London. It is desired that all the churches will send messengers once a year, as may be most for their conveniency; and that either from their particular churches, or those that live remote from such association as they think meet to keep—(2.) That the meeting at Bristol be kept annually at the time called Easter, and that at London at the time called Whitsuntide—(3.) That two messengers be sent down from London every time to that at Bristol, and also two sent up from that at Bristol to London, for the maintaining of general communion—(4.) For the better keeping up of the fund, that this method be observed; that all churches make quarterly collections in what way they think best for the encouragement of the ministry, by helping those ministers that are poor, and to educate brethren that may be approved to learn the knowledge of those tongues wherein the scriptures are written—(5.) That these assemblies are not to be accountable to one another any more than churches are—(6.) That no churches make appeals to them to determine matters of faith or fact, but propose or query for advice—(7.) That after both the meetings in the west and east have been held, a general narrative be printed and sent to all the churches, of such matters as may be of general use."

Dispute respecting public singing.

It had long been a subject of much controversy amongst the churches, and the occasion of great troubles and disorders, whether *the praises of God should be sung in the public assemblies*. It was now agreed by those who had written on both sides of the question, to refer the matter to the determination of seven of the brethren nominated by this assembly; and for that end the following question was put to both parties; viz. “Whether you are willing to be determined by the said brethren, and resolve to do what they shall determine, in order to the removing of all those reflections that are written in all the books printed on both sides about the controversy of singing, &c. The matters to be debated and determined are only respecting *reflections* and matters of *fact*.”

This question was fully agreed to by Mr. William Kiffin, Mr. John Man, Mr. George Barrette, Mr. William Collins, Mr. Benjamin Keach, Mr. Richard Steed, and Mr. Thomas Hollowell, the persons who were engaged in the controversy.

The seven ministers to whom this decision was referred were Mr. Andrew Gifford of Bristol, Mr. Edward White of Eversholt, Bedfordshire; Mr. Henry Austin of Norwich; Mr. Robert Keate of Wantage, Berks; Mr. John Wills of Allestrey, Derbyshire; Mr. Samuel Buttall of Plymouth; and Mr. John Scott.

The determination that was read to both parties in the assembly, May 24, 1692, was as follows:—

“Beloved and honoured in the Lord for your work’s sake!

WE your unworthy brethren whom you have chosen to examine and determine the matter aforesaid, so far as we know our own hearts, have singly, without respect of persons,

On Public Singing.

judged as for the Lord and unanimously concluded, that those persons who have been concerned in this controversy have on both sides erred in most of the particulars that have been laid before us. If we have been partial in any thing, it is only, for which we beg your pardon, that we lay your evils before you in easy terms, from the confidence that the grace of God will help you much more to aggravate them in your own souls; especially when you compare how unlike to Jesus Christ, and the holy commands he hath given for brotherly love, your treatment hath been one towards another; who when he was reviled, reviled not again. 1 Pet. 22, 23. And how far short in this controversy you have come in answering that character which the Spirit of God gives of true charity. 1 Cor. xiii. 4. Had the things wherewith you charge each other been true, we humbly conceive you should have taken those rules which Christ hath prescribed in a more private debate, way, and method, that would not have reflected upon your holy profession and the name of God, to convince one another of your errors; and that the ways you have taken to discover the nakedness of your brethren have been irregular, and tended rather to beget greater offences and stumblings, than convincing, healing, and recovering. Ham, for discovering the nakedness of Noah, was cursed of God. To proclaim one another's errors is from the evil one: and to give our enemies occasion to rejoice over our failings, is forbidden to be told in Gath and Askelon. 2 Sam. i. 20. You know who has said that the issue of *biting* will be to *devour one another*, if God prevent not. We grieve to think what dishonour your methods will bring to the name of God, what reproach to your holy profession, stumbling to sinners, and divisions among the churches of Christ. Therefore as brethren, partakers of the same grace, we humbly exhort you,

On Public Singing.

and pray God to make you all sensible of your errors, and humble you for them ; and that as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you, so you for his name's sake may forgive one another. And as he is pleased to make you sensible of your errors, acknowledge them one to another, and give us cause of great rejoicing who have been grieved while searching into your uncharitable, unsavoury censures, reflections, and reproaches, which you have in your books loaded one another with, and through temptation have been prevailed upon to take wrong measures and misrepresentations of one another within yourselves. And therefore in the name of the Lord and for his sake we entreat and determine that you proceed no longer in such methods.

“ We have also considered and determined, for the prevention of any farther reproach and dishonour that may come upon the name of the Lord and your holy profession, that nothing will prove more effectual to this end than that all persons concerned on both sides of this controversy be desired, and we do desire and determine that they should call in and bring all the books hereafter mentioned into the assembly, or to whom they shall appoint, and leave them to their disposal. And if any do persist in this reproachful method, we do seriously deliver it as our sense that such persons as sow offences, discords, and divisions, among the churches of Christ, should be marked. We could entreat you upon our knees, could we prevail in this matter, that you would join together to keep the unity of the Spirit, and our holy profession, in the bond of peace.

“ Moreover we entreat and determine that it be inserted in the narrative that none of the members of the churches do buy, give, or disperse any of those books aforesaid, nor any other that have those uncharitable reflections in them against

Remarks.

their brethren, and that no person do sell or give them to others. The names of the books, some of which we have seen, and all others that have such reflections though not seen, are—*A sober reply to Robert Steed's epistle—Truth soberly defended—A serious answer, &c.—Truth cleared, or a brief narrative of the rise, &c.*"

It must not be supposed by our readers that this general assembly, consisting of a hundred and seven churches, contained all the Baptist churches in England. These were particular Baptist churches; that is to say, they were Baptist churches which rejected the opinions of Arminius. We have found in the course of our history that there were *many hundreds of Baptists in Kent*; and these were almost all of them general Baptists, or Arminians, who did not own "the doctrines of personal election and final perseverance," which doctrines were held by those of whom we have been speaking. That the general Baptists were very numerous in many of the counties is evident from their petition presented to Charles II., which was owned and approved by upwards of twenty thousand. Neither is it to be supposed that this general assembly included the whole of the Particular Baptists, as it is well known there were many churches in Bedfordshire, founded principally by the labours of Mr. John Bunyan, which were not included in it, there being but two churches in this county mentioned in the account. The cause of this was doubtless the difference of sentiment on the subject of communion at the Lord's table, as these latter did not make baptism on a profession of faith essential to church fellowship, which the former did. Mr. Bunyan wrote in defence of the principle on which their churches were founded; and some other eminent Baptists, as Mr. Henry Jessey and Mr. Vavasor Powel, were of the same sentiment. Mr.

General Assembly at Bristol.

Kiffin, Mr. Danvers, and Mr. Denne, wrote on the opposite side; and from the complaints of Mr. Bunyan, it should seem, with some bitterness and acrimony. Such things ought certainly to be avoided, as injurious to the argument on either side, and utterly inconsistent with the benevolent spirit of the gospel.

There is no doubt but that in this year the western churches, agreeably to the resolution of the assembly the year before, had met in association at Bristol. Be that however as it may, some of them met at Frome on the 29th of March 1692. A manuscript Circular Letter of that date, addressed to the Baptized churches in the west, and signed by Robert Cox, Roger Cator, Richard Gay, Richard Itterly, William Cray, Lancelot Spurrier, Thomas Whinnell, which is in the handwriting of Mr. Andrew Gifford, is in the possession of the author. It contains the following minute;—"Our next association meeting, if God permit, is to begin on the Easter Tuesday, in the morning, at Westbury, at brother Cator's house, in the year 1693."

From this it is evident, that the Western churches met at different places according to the arrangement of 1691, previously to their general assembly at Bristol, to which all the churches in the West sent their representatives. To this meeting at Easter 1693, two persons were sent from London, and to the general assembly held in London at Whitsuntide, two were sent from Bristol. The proceedings of both these assemblies were published under the title of *A narrative of the proceedings of the Elders, Messengers, and ministering Brethren of divers baptized churches in England and Wales, holding the doctrines of particular election and final perseverance, in their general assembly at Bristol on the 19th of the second month, called April, 1693, and continued to the*

Address to the Bristol Assembly.

21st of the same. Also, containing the proceedings of the general assembly held in London the sixth day of the fourth month, called June, and continued till the 12th of the same.

The address from the assembly of Bristol is as follows. The elders and messengers of the several churches of Christ met together at Bristol, from the 19th of the second month to the 22nd of the same, to the respective churches of the same association.

“ Dearly beloved and longed after in the Lord,

“ The comfortable account we have given and received from most of the churches, their increase and peace among themselves; as also the comfortable union and sweet and amicable communion we have had together in this present assembly, give great cause of rejoicing in the Lord: and we desire that you also may be made partakers of the same joy. But we are greatly grieved that upon any pretence whatever, any one of the churches of Jesus Christ, should withhold its help in the work of the Lord, in such a working day and dispensation, wherein our Lord hath given us an opportunity to promote his interest. Were our hearts enlarged, fitted for his service, and suitable to our opportunity, how glorious and inviting might the house of the Lord be in our day! But oh! we mourn that we can do no more, and that there should be any found among ourselves to weaken our hands. The security, jealousies, divisions, and worldliness of some in pursuing their own things, and building their own houses, say the time is not come, the time that the Lord's house should be built, as they did Hag. i. 2. Yet certainly it is a time, if not the time, for building: And as we doubt not but God will take pleasure and delight in them that bring the least stick from the mountain to the building of his house, ver. 8. in like manner (to bear with our plainness)

Address.

we fear a blast from the Lord will be upon those that bring not their offering to the house of the Lord, ver. 6, 9, 10, 11. And therefore as fellow-servants and labourers in the Lord's vineyard, we humbly exhort you with the same prophet in the 5th verse, to consider your ways. We think there is great need of awakening and stirring up our own spirits as well as yours. God's judgments are abroad, though his salvation is yet at home; peace in the gates of Sion, and peace within our borders. The Lord grant that through a cold, lukewarm, careless, divided, uncharitable, indifferent frame of spirit, we may not provoke him to take away peace, and the gospel of peace from our nation, and cause us to feel those judgments which we do not fear (that have fallen terribly upon other parts) because of the house of the Lord that lies waste. If God doth enlarge your hearts to give to the fund, declare your use, and send by your next messenger, and it shall be disposed accordingly. Herewith we have sent you our breviates. Your messengers can give you a further account of our proceedings. The God of all grace give peace, rule amongst you, dwell with you, and richly supply all your wants. This is the earnest desire of

Your brethren waiting for the consolation of Israel.

Signed by us in the name of the whole.

WILLIAM GOUGH,

RICHARD ADAMS,

GEORGE FOWNES,

BENJAMIN DENNIS,

WILLIAM TANNER,

DANIEL GUILLIM,

GEORGE JOHN,

EDWARD MORTIMER,

JAMES JAMES,

WILLIAM HANKINS,

EDWARD ELLIOTT,

THOMAS WHINNELL,

JOHN SINGER,

THOMAS WARBURTON,

ANDREW GIFFORD,

JOHN FORD,

SAMUEL BUTTALL,

JAMES MURCH.

Breviates.

“The breviae of the proceedings of the Elders and Messengers of several churches met together at Bristol the 19th of the second month, 1693, and continued to the 22nd of the same.

“The first day was improved in solemnly seeking the face of God in prayer, for counsel, advice, and guidance in our whole work.

“The second day—After seeking the Lord, the letters from the several churches were read, and a particular relation of the state of all the churches was given in by their several messengers. Some questions were proposed, and the meeting was dismissed with the blessing of God.”

Q. Whether a gifted brother may administer in all ordinances?

A. That no private brother (however gifted) if not solemnly called to ministerial office, and separated thereto, ought to administer the ordinances of baptism and the Lord's supper.

Q. Whether a brother called to the office of elder by the suffrage of the church, may not administer all ordinances, though he be not immediately ordained by the laying on of the hands of the elders?

A. In the affirmative.

Whereas we have heard of some persons, who being vainly puffed up by their fleshly minds, do presume to preach publicly without being solemnly called and appointed by the church thereto, and some to administer all ordinances,

We advise and desire, that every particular church would do what in them lies to discountenance this practice, and to prevent all such from exercising their pretended gift, it being contrary to Rom. x. 15. And also that they would not send forth nor suffer any person among themselves, to preach

Breviates.

publicly, of whose qualifications they have not had sufficient trial, and whom they have not called thereto; that the name of God may not be dishonoured, the peace of the churches disturbed, nor the reputation of the ministry blemished.

That we may remove all jealousies, and give satisfaction to all our brethren, that there is no intention or design in this assembly, in relation to the education of youth, to promote human learning or acquired parts above, or to make them equal with the gifts of the Spirit, and the teachings thereof in and by his word, we do unanimously declare:—

1. That we abhor such a principle and practice, being satisfied and assured, that the gift for edification is a distinct thing from acquired parts; and that men may attain the greatest degrees in human learning, and yet notwithstanding be ignorant of Christ, and his glorious gospel.

2. That God does sometimes bestow greater gifts, for the edification of his church, on some who have not attained the knowledge of the tongues, than he doth on some others who have; and that the churches of Jesus Christ should improve what gifts they have, and pray for more.

3. That it is a great snare and very dangerous for any persons to think they can comprehend the great mysteries of the gospel, called *the hidden wisdom of God*, 1 Cor. 2, 7, 8. which he reveals unto his people by his Spirit, ver. 10. with their human learning, or worldly wisdom, 1 Cor. i. 19, 20, 21.

4. That they greatly abuse their knowledge of the tongues, who are puffed up thereby to lean upon it, and to despise their brethren, who have the gift for edification, though they have not the same acquired abilities.

5. That the knowledge of the tongues is not in itself essential, or absolutely necessary to constitute a minister of the

Breviates.

gospel; nor the greatest degree thereof, without the gift for edification, a sufficient qualification for the ministry; neither, 6. Dare we to limit the Holy One, who bestows the gift for edification upon the learned, as well as the unlearned, and who chooseth some of the wise, prudent, learned, though not many, 1. Cor. i. 26. And that when the knowledge of the tongues and the gifts of the Spirit meet together, and the knowledge of the tongues is made use of in subserviency to the gifts of the Spirit, they ought so much the more to be esteemed as they are made more useful, being beneficial for the conviction of gainsayers, by supplying apt words to convey the truths of the gospel into the understanding of their hearers. Yet when learned Paul plants, and eloquent Apollos waters, it is God only who can give the increase, 1. Cor. iii. 6. It is not the gifts of either the learned or the unlearned, but the blessing of God upon the gift of both, that makes successful; that no flesh should glory in his presence, but that he that glorieth may glory in the Lord.

Concluded, that brother Gifford, and brother Fownes, be appointed messengers from this assembly to the general assembly meeting at London upon the time called Whitsuntide.

That the time called Easter next, be the time for this assembly to meet at Bristol: and that the third day of that week be appointed as a day of prayer, and that one of our London brethren do preach at the close of it.

A Narrative of the General Assembly holden in London the sixth day of the fourth Month, called June, and continued until the twelfth day of the same, 1693.

The general Epistle to the Churches.

Dearly beloved in our Lord Jesus.

THE great God who hath given us a being in this world, and through our blessed Lord Jesus delivered us when fallen

Address of the London Assembly.

into a miserable state by sin, calls for all both of nature and grace to be employed for his glory; and our continual study should be, how we should give up both soul and body a living sacrifice to him: his service is both our duty and reward, the highest honour and happiness of our nature both here and to eternity. It exceedingly becomes us who are the redeemed of the Lord to say so, and to render the glory of it to him, both in purity of doctrine concerning the grace of redemption, and in holiness of life.

The former your confession of faith has published to the world, which will be a standing monument to your honour in ages to come, as in this age it hath much taken away your reproach amongst all sorts of Protestants. That which remains is a life thoroughly suited to your doctrine, and in this you and we have need to be continually put in mind, that our conversation be as becomes the gospel. Satan endeavours, if he cannot corrupt our heads with false doctrine, to defile our conversation either with a worldly and sensual frame, or to fill us with a spirit of contention and bitterness among ourselves; or towards other saints that differ from us. The holy apostle hath counselled us against his toils, and warned us to look to ourselves, lest any root of bitterness spring up in us. Brethren, ye carry about you the relics of the old man, a body of sin and death, against which as against the evil angels you must maintain a continual war. We have reason, we humbly think, thus to caution you, because we fear, nay too much experience, that this day of liberty, though it hath eased us of the yoke of persecution, hath set the devil upon other methods, and given a lure to our corruptions through our want of watchfulness, which too evidently appears in the decay of piety and charity among us, and a general minding of our own things, not the things of Christ; together

Continued.

with fears and jealousies one of another on account of our assembling these two or three years last past together, and the methods that have been taken for the promotion of the truths of God professed by us, and the assisting of the churches of God with our humble advice and counsel, things so excellent in their own nature : and although in our acting in the first assembly security was given, whereby the power of the churches was fully preserved, yet a great declining appears, both with respect to your sending messengers to this assembly, and to that which met at Bristol, and also with respect to that which was one end of it, the fund for the maintenance of necessitous ministers and brethren gifted to preach the gospel, and also for the educating of young men of inviting gifts for the ministry in learning ; a thing of that use and advantage, that time will fully shew the benefit of it, and confirm the arguments that have been used for it. Against this a mighty wind hath been raised, both in this city and all the churches of our way in the nation, as if from hence would follow a neglect of gifts already in the churches, where there is not the advantage of learning : and although this objection was obviated in the beginning, yet in what follows in this narrative you will see it again removed, if possible, out of the way.

Dear Brethren, we must say, if this day of liberty be lost with trifling and quarrelling amongst ourselves, or from a covetous spirit in us this work of the Lord be hindered, the account will be dreadful, and the next generation may reflect back with grief upon us, that we did not what we could for the service of God and of truth in our generation.

We have cause to bless God that we are on the side of truth ; but if we do not labour to clothe and nourish it by the blessings God hath given us, it may suffer exceedingly.

Breviates.

There are human ways and means wherein we may be serviceable to truth, and God will require it at our hands if we fail in the performance of them. David blessed God that he and his people had a heart to offer willingly to the service of the temple.

Many worthy ministers have been assisted hitherto by the Fund, and some young men brought up who are likely to be exceedingly useful in their generation, and may in a few years standing shew that the methods designed were not only religious but very prudent.

Brethren, let not this work die in your hands; send cheerfully your messengers the next year either to Bristol or London, and there at least they will behold the good fruit of their fund: and if God please, we purpose here to follow their steps, hoping you will countenance and encourage what you can.

JOHN TOMKINS,

JOHN WARD,

RICHARD ADAMS,

WILLIAM KIFFIN,

ANDREW GIFFORD,

JOSEPH HARDING,

LEONARD HARRISON,

BENJAMIN GUNDIN,

BENJAMIN DENNIS,

GEORGE RICHARDSON,

GEORGE FOWNES,

JOHN SCOT.

The elders and messengers met at London the 6th day of the month called June, and continued to the 12th of the same.

The first day was spent in prayer to God for counsel and direction in matters that should lie before them, and for a blessing on the churches.

The second day was spent in reading the letters, and taking an account of the state of the churches from their

Breviates.

messengers, to whom, in answer to divers questions which they propounded, the advice and resolution of the elders and messengers were given. And with respect to the orderly management of matters, it was resolved :

1st. That every one have his liberty to speak without interruption.

2nd. That if any be of a different opinion from what is proposed, he may have liberty to speak his opinion, and argue with Christian charity.

The proceedings of the assembly at Bristol were read by their messengers, and assented to.

3d. Concluded, that the fund be continued and upheld, according to a former agreement Anno Dom. 1691, and that the money given for the poor ministers of Christ shall be continued, and the money given for the educating of young men of inviting gifts for the ministry in the knowledge of the tongues be appropriated to them.

4th. That a Catechism be drawn up, containing the substance of the Christian religion, for the instruction of children and servants, and that brother William Collins be desired to draw it up.

5th. That the confession of faith of the baptized churches, of the last impression, be translated into Latin with all convenient speed.

6th. That the next meeting of elders and messengers be at London, beginning at the time called Whitsuntide, the 2nd day of the week, and that the next day be kept in prayer."

By comparing the names of persons who attended these meetings it appears, that Mr. Richard Adams and Mr. Benjamin Dennis went from London to Bristol ; and that Mr. Andrew Gifford and Mr. George Fownes were deputed by the Bristol assembly to attend the assembly in London.

Assembly at Bristol.

The next year the Bristol assembly met according to appointment. We have before us an account of their proceedings in manuscript; but we presume it was never printed. It is as follows:—

“The messengers of the several churches hereafter named, viz. of the churches of Sudbury, Plymouth, Looe, Southwick, Calne, Haycombe, Westbury, Melksham, Bridgewater, Taunton, Bristol, Bradford, Lanow, and in the counties of Carmarthen, Cardigan, Pembroke, Brecknock, Monmouth, and Glamorgan, met together at Bristol the 16th of the second month, 1694.

The first day was spent in solemnly seeking the face of God for wisdom, counsel, and direction, and concluded with a sermon suitable to the occasion.

On the 2nd day, (being the 11th of the 2nd month, 1694,) after seeking the Lord, the letters from the several churches were read, and an account was taken from the messengers of the state of the churches, and several cases were considered, and questions answered, &c. These proceedings, with a letter to the churches, were sent to London, addressed as follows:—

To our Honoured and beloved Brethren William Kiffin, and William Collins, to be communicated to the assembly of messengers held in London at the time called Whitsuntide.

BELOVED,

THE assembly held in Bristol at the time called Easter desired us to acquaint you, that they were grieved because you, who some few years ago did zealously promote such associations for the general good of the churches and the glory of Christ, have declined it. They willingly joined with you, and would still, were you willing. You know how often the

Address to the London Ministers.

country sent to London, whilst you have sent but once to the country, and are weary. Nevertheless to shew their desire of communion with you, they ordered us to send you a copy of their epistle, and of the account of the meeting, both which they sent to the churches that sent them. Moreover they desire you will remember your agreement at your last assembling, and minuted in the narrative that brother Collins should draw up a catechism, and that it should be printed, a thing so needful and useful that the country have been longing to have it, and are troubled at the delay of it, and earnestly desire that you will hasten the printing of it. They suppose that the greatness of the number that will be sold will pay the cost. There had need be thousands of them printed, pray let it be done, and sent abroad to the churches. They think you cannot do any thing that will be of more general use.

With the tender of our hearty respects to you, and our earnest desires for the revival of that good work which has been began by you, we remain,

Your unworthy brethren, &c.”

From this it appears that the zeal of the London churches had greatly declined. It is with pleasure we copy the following extract, because it is honourable to the churches in the West. “We greatly rejoice to find the several churches to which we stand related, manifesting so much hearty and cordial love and good will to our associations, and that our last narrative from this assembly hath been so useful in removing the jealousies and misapprehensions that divers persons, and some churches, had concerning our designs in bringing up several young men, who were gifted brethren, to the knowledge of the tongues in which the holy scriptures

Association at Bristol.

were written; a work for God in our generation, which we hope not only the churches in this day will have cause to bless God for, but also the generations to come.

This letter was signed by

RICHARD GAY,	EDWARD ELLIOTT,
WILLIAM GOUGH,	ROBERT MORGAN,
THOMAS WHINNELL,	GEORGE JOHN,
JOSEPH HOLTON,	SAMUEL BUTTALL,
JOHN BELTON,	ROBERT BODENHAN,
ANDREW GIFFORD,	JEREMIAH REED,
SAMUEL HEMMEN,	JOSHUA JAMES, &c.
GEORGE FOWNES,	

The next meeting to be at Bristol, and to begin on Tuesday in the week called Easter 1695."

From this period we apprehend the general assembly was discontinued in London, as we hear no more of any correspondence between Bristol and London, nor of any meeting at the latter place. We have in our possession in manuscript, nearly all the Circular Letters of the Bristol association from the year 1692 to 1730. That for the year 1696 is missing; but we know on the authority of Mr. Thomas's M. S. that it assembled in that year, as some questions were proposed to it by a church in Wales.

Either in this year or the following, the Western churches changed the time of their meeting from Easter to Whitsuntide, at which last time their annual association still continues to be held.

The letter for the year 1697 is so excellent, and contains so much information concerning the state of religion among our churches, that we shall give it at large.

Western Association.

“ The elders and messengers of the baptized congregations usually meeting in Haycombe, Southwick, Trowbridge, Bridgewater, Taunton, Westbury, Broadmead, and Fryers, at Bristol, Cardigan, Carmarthen, Pembrokeshire, Malmsbury, Loughwood and Lyme, and Aberystwith in Monmouthshire; and at Norton in Kilmington: assembled at Bristol the 25th 26th and 27th of May, 1697.—To the respective churches whereunto we stand related, with the mulitiplication of all grace and peace from God the Father and our Lord Jesus Christ.

Dearly beloved and longed for in our dearest Lord Jesus.

“ WE return you hearty thanks for sending your messengers to associate with us, and for thereby giving us an opportunity of being acquainted with your state, and of using our joint endeavours for the promoting of the interest of our blessed Lord among you. We hope (through grace) the divine presence has not been altogether wanting in our assembly, but that we have felt some sweet breathings of the Holy Spirit, have experienced some guidance in our consultations and debates, and have been blessed with a joyous preservation in love, peace, and unanimity. Our hearts have been made glad with the account we have received from some churches of the peacefulness of their state, and of their happy increase by reviving additions; but we have been also saddened by an account of the declining disturbed condition of others. We rejoice with thankfulness that the holy God hath not totally withdrawn himself, and left his churches wholly destitute of any intimations of his favourable presence. But there is just occasion for bitter lamentation to observe how much his glory is departed. We are indeed favoured with a day of gospel liberty, and with a plentiful enjoyment of the means of grace. But alas! where is the answerable

Letter to the Churches.

fruits? God reasonably expects we should bring forth the fruits of faith, love, zeal, joy, peace, meekness, humility, patience, self-denial, weanedness from the world, longing desires after, and dilligent preparations for the glorious appearing of our beloved Lord; with the growth and increase in all these since the means of greace are abundantly afforded us. But behold, (and Oh that our eyes may suitably affect our hearts!) instead of these blessed fruits of the Spirit, the cursed fruits of the flesh seem to load our branches. What worldliness, pride, hypocrisy, formality, spiritual sloth, lukewarm indifference, sensuality, addictedness to pleasures, earthliness, jarrings, animosities, contentions, and unchristian carriage are to be found among us! Oh! foolish people and unwise, thus ungratefully to requite our good and gracious Lord. Are these the returns of love and praise, the revenues of honour and of glory, which we owe unto his great name? We may surely say, It is of the Lord's mercy that we are not consumed; that our candlesticks are not removed, and that God hath not pulled down the hedge of his protection, and let in the wild boars of the forest upon us. We yet enjoy the day of his patience; he is waiting upon us to be gracious unto us; he calls after us by his word and awakening rebukes; and he seems unwilling to be gone: Oh! that we may not by our incorrigibleness, and by our continued provocations, drive him away! For woe, woe, will be indeed unto us, when the Lord departs from us. But shall we, can we contentedly let him go? God forbid! Let us then stir up ourselves to take hold of him, let us heartily mourn over, humble ourselves for, and implore his gracious forgiveness of, and let us speedily and impartially put away from us, far from us, those things which are an offence unto him, which grieve his Holy Spirit, and which are dishonour-

Continued.

able to his sacred Name. Let us diligently, cheerfully, and resolvedly, set about our duty to him. Let us remember from whence we are fallen, and repent, and do our first works. Let our too much forsaken closets be again frequented, our frequent and humble supplications, spiritual meditations, heart searching examinations, be revived there. Let our families be filled with the savour of God, and our children brought up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. Let not our places be empty in the assemblies to which we stand related, nor filled up only with proud, vain, lifeless, covetous, formal professors. Let every one in his station heartily aspire after the power of godliness, which is now in a languishing state, and endeavour to recommend the ways of God to others, by adorning in all things the doctrine of God and our Saviour; being rich in good works, ready to distribute, willing to communicate, walking inoffensively to saints and sinners; shewing forth the praise worthy virtues of that God, by whom we profess to have been called out of darkness into his marvellous light, living in love and peace, and this is the way to enjoy the God of love and peace amongst us: that we may all thus do, you have our hearty prayers to the God of all peace, and we desire yours. And referring you to your messengers for an account of our proceedings, we subscribe ourselves your affectionate, though unworthy brethren and servants for the Lord's sake.

Agreed, that the next association be held at Taunton in the Whitsunweek 1698. The Tuesday to be improved in prayer with a sermon in the close to be preached by our brother Gifford.

Signed by us in the name of the whole.

RICHARD GAY,

ROBERT WEBB,

WILLIAM GOUGH,

EDWARD ELLIOTT,

Divisions in the Churches.

ANDREW GIFFORD,	JAMES JAMES
THOMAS WHINNELL,	ABEL MORGAN,
JOHN DAVISON,	GEORGE JOHN,
JOSEPH MATTHEWS,	ROBERT BODENHAM,
JOHN WEBB,	SAMUEL HUNT,
GEORGE FOWNES,	WILLIAM WILKINS.
SAMUEL HEMMENS,	

We have not the letter of the next year, but it should seem the assembly met at Taunton both then and in July 1699. The address to the churches is very serious, but has many of the complaints of the letter of 1697. Differences existed too in some of the churches, which they attempted to reconcile. One resolution respecting singing in the public worship of God we shall notice. "In reply to the church at Bampton, we humbly think those who are not for the practice of singing after the Lord's supper may, without wrong to their own consciences, leave those to their liberty who are for singing, to stay and sing in the same place where the supper is administered, after those who are not for singing are gone, and this we think will be much more honourable to the name of God and our holy profession than to send away dissatisfied members by recommendation."

It was also resolved "to associate at Exon on Easter Tuesday in the year 1700, and that the messengers of every church do provoke the particular church to which they belong to send to the association what they do collect for the fund, and to assign the particular uses, whether towards the more comfortable encouragement of ministers, or the education of youth."

"Agreed also, that there be an association at Bristol, beginning on Tuesday in the Whitsun-week in the said year

Association.

1700 ; and that two persons be approved and sent from the association at Exon above-mentioned to meet with them at Bristol.

“ Agreed also, that there be a general association meeting together at Taunton, to begin on Thursday in the week after Whitsuntide in the year 1701, and that both the particular meetings in association at Exon and Bristol be omitted for that year. That brother Whinnell be appointed to preach at Exon ; brother Davison at Bristol ; and brother Buttall at Taunton.”

This letter was signed in the respective hand-writings of the following ministers :—

SAMUEL BUTTALL,	RICHARD TIDMARSH,
ROBERT STONE,	THOMAS WHINNELL,
ANDREW GIFFORD,	JOHN HANSON,
GEORGE FOWNES,	JAMES HITT,
MORGAN JOHN	CRISTOPHER FROST,
JOHN BURROWS,	EDWARD ELLIOTT,
RICHARD SAMPSON,	EBENEZER WILSON,
JOHN SHARPE,	BENJAMIN NOBLE,
DANIEL HARVEY,	THOMAS BOWDEN.

We have the proceedings of the association the next year at Bristol ; and also of the general meeting in the year 1701, at Taunton. We insert the first of these, but must (for the present at least) omit the other, on account of its exceeding the period to which we confine our history.

“ The messengers of the several churches of Jesus Christ meeting severally at Calne, Malmsbury, Westbury-Lye, Junisvach, Aberystwith, Glaudcor, Lanwenarth, King’s Stanley, Trowbridge, Southwick, Fryers and Broadmead in Bristol ; Frome, and brother Sparling with the members

Letter to the Churches.

under his care, being met together in the city of Bristol the 21st, 22nd and 23rd of the third month 1700; to the churches to which they belong.

Beloved in our Lord Jesus,

“WE thankfully acknowledge the great mercy and goodness of our God in giving us liberty and opportunity to meet together to consult his glory, and the good of his Zion. And truly, brethren, we have great cause of joy and rejoicing that we hear that any of the churches of Jesus Christ are in peace, and do prosper in grace, in gifts, and in converts: we can truly say, Would it were the state of all the churches! But alas! whilst we are endeavouring to rejoice in the goodness of God, and in the prosperity of some, our spirits are overwhelmed with sorrow in considering the heart-breaking estate and the dismal circumstances of others. The several cases laid before us do too plainly discover what sad work the devil, the world, and unmortified corruptions, do make amongst some that fear the Lord in truth. And to speak plainly brethren, it is to us a sad intimation of the presence and glory of God being withdrawn from his people; and a dreadful prognostic of judgments impending: and what can we expect will be our portion, without speedy repentance and timely reformation; but judgments far worse than hitherto any of our eyes have seen? If God has given us liberty of conscience, is it a suitable return to him that we should defile our own, and offend the consciences of others? If we have peace without, is it a right improvement of it to fall upon and devour each other within? What can we expect but either to be devoured of each other, or (if mercy prevent not by restraining our fury) that our gracious and tender Father should take the rod in his hand, and part and chastise his contending children?

Continued.

“Brethren, you are not only our joy, but our charge, our flocks, over whom God hath made us overseers, and of whose souls we must give an account to the chief and great Shepherd at the last day. That we may give up our accounts with joy and not with grief, having the testimony of your consciences in conjunction with our own that we have been faithful; we, as your watchmen, seeing your danger and knowing your sin, do now again, as in times past, blow the trumpet and warn you that we may free ourselves from your blood: pray see that you are not self-destroyers. Read at your leisure Ezek. chap. xxxiii. There you may see the duty of a faithful watchman, and what will bethe reward of the man that is faithful to his charge, together with the happiness of the people or individual that obey, and the misery of those that will not take timely admonition. It is, beloved, the groans of the spouse of Christ; it is the smart of the gaping wounds of the dear Lord Jesus; it is the languishing state of the interest of our blessed Lord; it is the zeal we have for the name of Christ, and the affection which we bear to your souls, that engage us thus to express ourselves to you. We need not tell you what is your disease; that is plain; but give us leave to suggest to you the causes, and the method of cure. You read that by pride comes contention. Pride, brethren, lies at the foundation of all your quarrels: Subdue then your pride and humble yourselves, and condescend to each other, and your contest will soon be at an end. We beseech you to take the apostle’s advice, “Submit yourselves one to another; be clothed with humility; and put on meekness and lowliness of mind, which are of great esteem in the sight of God.” He will then look upon you with a favourable regard, he will walk with you, he will accept sacrifice from you; yea, he will dwell with you, and

Continued.

you shall dwell with him for ever. Need we say you want love to each other, and therefore cannot bear with, nor forbear each other? Love is a virtue that will do much for peace; it is so far from working ill, that it will not so much as think ill. "Be ye therefore followers of God as dear children; walk in love, and ye shall not fulfil the lusts of the flesh." Take the beloved apostle's advice, "Little children, love one another," and you will thereby appear to be true disciples of Jesus Christ. Let your love be without dissimulation; let it be with a pure heart fervently. Sympathize with each other's infirmities; consider each other's temptations: forgive each other's sinful provocations, and we doubt not but with the Lord's blessing these things will reconcile you at present, and prevent your future divisions. Brethren, give us leave to provoke you to love and good works: remember the love of Jesus Christ: let it constrain you to forgive and undergo any thing rather than crucify him afresh. Do not grieve nor quench the Spirit of grace, whereby you may be sealed unto the day of redemption. Do not stumble any in, or out of, the ways of God. Let not the way of God be evil spoken of through you. Do not grieve any faithful servant of Jesus Christ. Keep your garments from being spotted with the flesh. Give no offence to Jew or Gentile, or to the church of Christ: walk worthy of the Lord to all well pleasing, being fruitful in every good word and work. Hereby you will glorify your heavenly Father, and give to others occasion so to do in the day of their visitation. We might propose many things to encourage you, but we will leave that to your particular servant, and not so much as mention what will be the benefits your souls would enjoy in life and at death, if you are found in a conscientious discharge of your duty in this matter. Brethren,

Continued.

to provoke you, (not to glory) we say, that through the goodness of God, the debating of your unhappy differences and divisions hath made no discord nor division amongst us; but that we have done it with calmness of spirit, with moderation, and with mutual forbearance. And we entertain great hope, that as the God of peace hath been with us in consulting, so the blessing of God will follow the advice given, and you will do all in your power to keep the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace. May the breaches in Zion be all made up: may peace and prosperity be always within her walls: may the number of her converts be great: may her gifts encrease, and may her graces flourish: may her weak souls be strengthened: may her disconsolate and her tempted be succoured; and may her backsliding and apostatizing children be restored. May your souls in particular thrive, and may your comforts and enjoyments be great: may you be rich in good works, and lay up for yourselves a good foundation against the time to come. May you be followers of us, and of them who through faith and patience inherit the promises. These things are the sincere desire of your servants for Christ's sake.

ANDREW GIFFORD,	ROBERT WASTFIELD,
WILLIAM GOUGH,	EBENEZER WILSON,
THOMAS WHINNELL,	EDWARD ELLIOTT,
JOHN FORD,	JAMES MURCH,
GEORGE FOWNES,	WILLIAM WILKINS,
DAVID TOWNSEND,	JOHN BELTON.

Memorandum—It is desired that the messengers of every church do provoke the particular churches belonging to the association; and that in subscribing to the fund, the particular uses be expressed of each subscription, whether it be

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for the support of poor ministers, or for the education of young brethren. The next association is to be after Whitsun-week.

The following remarks which Crosby makes on the Baptists in general, can only be true respecting the connection which the Particular Baptists in London had with those in the country. "The inconvenience attending the general assemblies of the Baptists by the great distance of some who were to attend them, and the churches being settled in peace and unity, brought the baptized churches into other methods of regulating themselves; so that instead of meeting annually in general bodies, they met together some of them at appointed times, to consult about such things as might have a tendency to the well-being and good of the whole, and communicated by letters to each other their proceedings and agreements."

From the letters of the Western association we learn what was the state of things among the Particular Baptists at this period. It is very affecting to observe what were the consequences of that ease and prosperity which they now enjoyed. We may take up the lamentation of the prophet Amos, and say, "When Ephraim spake trembling, he exalted himself in Israel; but when he offended in Baal, he died." Persecution for twenty-eight years winnowed the churches, and kept them free from hypocrites and formal professors. Afflictions kept under the corruptions of the people of God, and preserved them from biting and devouring one another. But when the political horizon was cleared, when the sun of prosperity arose upon the nation, and when the sword of oppression was wrested from the hand of the persecutor; then pride, covetousness, worldly mindedness, and the lust of dominion prevailed, and nothing but distraction and misery appeared in many, if not

Remarks.

in most of our churches. It is however a consoling reflection, that this spirit was not manifested by the ministers and pastors. These seem to have acted in perfect harmony. Nor does it appear that the discontinuance of the general assembly of all the churches was owing to the ministers in London; it is more probable that it arose from their being unable to prevail on their churches to act in conformity to their wishes. We hear no complaints of their assuming any authority over each other. It is impossible to discover that any one of them thought himself entitled to more honour than his brethren in any of their meetings. Their names are signed indiscriminately, without any regard to seniority or to station. The meetings at London and Bristol, for the short period they continued, prove that Ephraim did not envy Judah, nor Judah vex Ephraim. Neither do we meet with complaints that any one of the churches had imbibed any error in doctrine. As yet the confession of faith recommended by the Assembly in 1689, was the standard of doctrine for all our churches. The baneful seeds of Arianism had not yet been sown in the churches of this kingdom. With this the Western churches were afterwards much infected, and by it some of them were destroyed. The faithfulness of the ministers too deserves notice, and is worthy the imitation of their successors: unaffected by the reproaches cast on them for attempting to provide for a learned and useful ministry, they steadily pursued their object. This proves, that whatever were the causes which prevented the full accomplishment of this design, the ministers were always exceedingly desirous of promoting the improvement of those gifts which the great Head of the church had bestowed for the edification of his people: Covetousness among the hearers prevented that which it was in the hearts of the ministers to carry into full effect.

Baptist Academy founded.

But here we have to introduce an honourable exception. This is Mr. Edward Terrill, the founder of the Bristol Education Society. The Estate which he bequeathed at his death in 1686, to the pastor of the church in Broadmead Bristol, laid the foundation of that institution where so many excellent men have been instructed in the way of God more perfectly.

It is not known where the students were educated before the year 1710, when Mr. Caleb Jope was chosen by the church in Broadmead to assist Mr. Kitterell the pastor, and to educate young men for the ministry. That there were some educated before this period is expressly asserted. It is probable that they were placed with different learned ministers, of whom there were many at that time in the denomination, in the same way that the students of the London Education Society have been for several years past.

After giving so full an account of the Particular Baptist churches, it will be necessary to give what information we possess respecting the churches of the General Baptists.

From their origin to about this time they had uniformly agreed with the Particular Baptists, except with regard to the doctrines of discriminating grace.

A few years after the Revolution, at one of their General Assemblies, an event took place which led to consequences that were very injurious to that denomination. We mean the denial of the doctrine of the Trinity, and the imbibing of depreciating views of the person of Christ. The history of this affair is thus related by Crosby.

“Mr. Joseph Wright of Maidstone brought a charge against Mr. Matthew Caffin of Horsham, and insisted on his being excluded both from the assembly, and from all communion with the Baptist churches; and in proof of his

Errors of Mr. Caffin.

charge, alleged several things he had heard from him in private conversation; and in particular, that he had started such objections to certain material parts of the Athanasian creed as amounted to a direct denial both of the *divinity* and *humanity* of Christ. Mr. Caffin's answer to these charges was to this effect. 'He readily acknowledged that there were some propositions in that creed which were above his understanding, after the most diligent and impartial examination; and therefore he never had nor could as yet receive it as the standard of his faith. He insisted upon it that the holy scriptures contained all that could be necessary for a Christian to believe and profess; that if he were from hence catechised ever so severely, he should not decline a free and open declaration of his sentiments, alleging his belief in Christ as the Word in the beginning of the creation of God, and that he was in the highest imaginable sense *God*, consistently with that most established truth, that there can be but one absolutely supreme God. He thought Christ was the God over all intended by St. Paul, which he could understand conformably to our Lord's own declarations concerning himself. That as to his *flesh*, he believed Christ was the seed of the woman, the son and offspring of David, conceived indeed miraculously, but born of Mary in the same natural way as other children. That it had been his honour and delight to honour his Saviour, both as God and *man*, to the highest degree of thought. That he had never disturbed the minds of any Christians about unrevealed sublimities, but was willing every one should have the same liberty of judgment that he claimed for himself. That he was far enough from perfection of knowledge; but as his friends well knew, he was always open to conviction, and thankful for every addition of further light.'

Conduct of the Assembly.

“This defence (says Crosby) gave a general satisfaction to the assembly, which was then very numerous; and Mr. Wright was much discountenanced for his unbecoming reflections and want of charity.”

Some time after, at a general assembly held at Aylesbury, Mr. Wright and some other minister who is not mentioned, exhibited a charge of a similar nature against Mr. Caffin, but was again disappointed, as the assembly was determined to maintain unity and friendship with Mr. Caffin, *though he might vary in some abstruse unrevealed speculations.*

These disappointments caused Mr. Wright to leave the assemblies, and protest against them all. “Yet (says Crosby) the seeds of contention he had sown, sprung up, and brought forth such bad fruit as had like to have been of ill consequence. The churches in Buckinghamshire and Northamptonshire exhibited the like charge to the assembly against Mr. Caffin, and moved that he might be brought to judgment. Mr. Caffin laboured with great meekness and condescension to explain himself, and recover their good opinion, but with little success. So that after their repeated complaints, the assembly agreed that the next year his case should be fully examined. This was to be at Whitsuntide in the year 1700.

“The general assembly at that time being met, and Mr. Caffin being present, to prevent confusion and tedious debate, they appointed a committee of eight persons, four on the side of the complainants, to confer with Mr. Caffin, and to draw up some expedient to be assented to and signed, which might be a sufficient ground of union. This was done, read several times, and signed by those present, and was as follows, according to the account published by the complainants.

Discontents.

“ According to the trust reposed in us, we offered to the assembly that it be agreed to, That Christ, as he was the Word, is from the beginning; but in time that Word took on him the seed of Abraham, and as such is Emanuel, God with us, or God manifest in the flesh: and as he is the Word he is one with the Father and the Holy Ghost. As he was God manifest in the flesh, so he is the Jesus who tasted death for every man. And further: whereas there have been and still are debates about the Most High God, we conceive that he is one infinite, unchangeable, eternal Spirit, and incomprehensible Godhead, and doth subsist in the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost.

WILLIAM COOCH,

DAVID BROWNE,

THOMAS HIRLEY,

JOHN HUSSUM,

WILLIAM VINCENT,

JOHN AMORY,

BENJAMIN MILLER,

NATHANIEL GALE.

“ In the assembly's journal, the following clause, which the publishers omitted, is inserted, viz. That the defence which brother Matthew Caffin has made, together with his acknowledgments, are to the satisfaction of the assembly.

“ At the next general meeting was presented a long letter from the churches in the county of Northampton, complaining that Mr. Caffin was not tried according to their satisfaction. After debating deliberately upon it, it was put to the vote and carried by a great majority, that the declaration which Mr. Caffin had made, and his signing the aforesaid expedient, was sufficient and satisfactory. This however was not sufficient: many of the churches withdrew, and called the assembly Caffinites. For several years the separation continued; but at length, after some essays for a friendly union, it was

Sentiments of Mr. Caffin.

accomplished; and they united upon the sure foundation of forbearance and charity, adhering to the scriptures only as the complete and only rule of faith and practice."

The sentiments of Mr. Caffin are more particularly mentioned by Crosby in another part of his work. He says, "He could easily understand and heartily assent to all that the scriptures did say concerning either the Father, the Son, or the Holy Ghost; but he used to complain that he did not know what to do when told that he must perish everlastingly unless he believed that the Son is both co-eternal with the Father and also begotten of him. That the Father, Son, and Spirit, must each by himself be acknowledged to be God, to be Almighty, one Incomprehensible, and one Eternal. What others could do he knew not, nor did he envy their penetration; but whenever he went about to understand this scheme, he could not help running into the express contradiction of three eternal almighty persons, and but *one* such person; that each by himself is God, and yet that each by himself is not God, because there are not three Gods, and but one only. Nor was it easy to him to apprehend how a perfect God, and a perfect man, though ever so closely united, can be any other than two persons, and two Christs, instead of one."

We are surprised that Crosby should bring such heavy charges against Mr. Joseph Wright. He charges him with "having much injured his friend Mr. Matthew Caffin, who in the freedom of conversation, had intimated some doubts respecting the *Athanasian Creed*; with putting the worst sense on his private discourses, and charging his opinions as blasphemous and heretical: and finally, with bringing those charges against him at the general assemblies."

It is rather extraordinary too that, notwithstanding Mr Wright is represented as having acted so injuriously to his

Remarks.

friend, Crosby should in another part of his work represent him as "a man of great piety, learning, and usefulness, who promoted the cause of the Baptists very much." He has however inadvertently borne an honourable testimony to his worth, by proving that he preferred the cause of God and truth to any considerations of private friendship, or popular odium, in opposing the decisions of the assembly.

It appears to us that Mr. Caffin was an artful person, who, under the pretext of opposing the human explanations of divine and inexplicable subjects, and the damnatory clauses of the Athanasian creed, intended to represent the scriptural doctrines of the Trinity, and of the union of the divine and human natures in the person of Christ, as absurdities which it was irrational for a Christian to believe.

We have inserted his sophistical representation of these sublime mysteries, because the nature of our work seems to require it; but we think it necessary to make some remarks on it, that our readers may be preserved from the infection of the Socinian heresy.

The doctrine of the Trinity, or of three divine persons, or distinct subsistences, in the one Jehovah; as well as that of the union of the divine and human natures in the person of Christ; are matters of pure revelation, which the scriptures plainly assert, but do not attempt to explain; and which all those who receive the scriptures as inspired truth are bound to believe, whether they can comprehend them or not. Had there been no mysteries in divine revelation, there would have been no analogy in that respect between it and the works of creation; and human reason, unassisted by the Holy Spirit, would have been able to comprehend those things which are the objects of that faith which is the effect of the operation of God. Mr. Caffin indeed said, that *he*

Continued.

could easily understand and heartily assent to all that the scriptures did say concerning the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost. But what did he mean by saying that he understood those things? Did he mean that he perfectly comprehended them? If so, he had by searching found out God, even the Almighty unto perfection! But we presume that neither Mr. Caffin, nor any of those who have adopted his creed, would venture to say that they could understand so as to comprehend either the Eternity, the Omnipresence, or the Omnipotence of Jehovah; and yet these things must be believed and professed by them, if they would avoid the imputation of being Atheists!

Did not Mr. Caffin know that the Scriptures expressly attribute to the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, Omnipotence, Incomprehensibility, and Eternity; whilst at the same time they maintain that there is but one Divine Being? What do the Trinitarians do more? They do not believe that three eternal persons are but one person; nor that each by himself is God, and yet that each by himself is not God; as Mr. Caffin erroneously supposed. Is there no difference between believing that the one divine Being subsists in three persons, and believing that these three persons are only one person? The latter proposition is contrary both to reason and scripture; whilst the former, at the same time that it is founded upon scripture, is not contrary to reason, although it is beyond the power of reason to comprehend it, in which respect it resembles the mysteries of natural religion, the other mysteries of revealed religion, and the mysteries of creation and providence.

“Where reason fails with all its powers,

There faith prevails, and love adores.”

Portsmouth Disputation.

At this period the Baptists both general and particular who were agreed in the doctrine of the Trinity, the divinity of the son of God &c., appear to have been on the most friendly terms. Their different sentiments on the doctrine of Election and Perseverance prevented the union of their churches, but did not prevent their friendly correspondence and intercourse on other occasions. A circumstance which will produce evidence in support of this opinion we shall proceed to mention, in which ministers of both denominations were engaged.

About three months after the revolution there was a public dispute held at Portsmouth between the Baptists and the Presbyterians on the subject of Baptism. The literary champions on the side of the Baptists were Dr. William Russel who was a General Baptist minister of London; Mr. John Williams of East Knoyle, Wiltshire; and Mr. John Sharpe of Frome, who were Particular Baptists. For the Presbyterians were Mr. Samuel Chandler of Fareham; Mr. Leigh of Newport; and Mr. Robinson of Hungerford. The last mentioned person was moderator on the side of the Presbyterians, and Mr. Sharpe on that of the Baptists.

It appears that this debate was held by royal authority. King William had been applied to by the Honourable Major General Earl, governor; Colonel John Gibson, lieutenant governor, of his majesty's garrison of Portsmouth; and by the worshipful Henry Seager Esq. Mayor, to grant leave to the Presbyterians "publicly to vindicate the common cause of the reformed churches" and to settle the wavering amongst them in the belief and practice of those truths which tended very much to the advancement of early piety and religion.*

With this request his majesty graciously complied, and ordered all officers civil and military to attend for the preservation of peace and good order.

* Mr. Chandler's Impartial Account. *Dedication.*

Mr. Chandler's Address.

The parties accordingly met at the Presbyterian meeting-house in High-Street, Portsmouth, on February 22nd 1698—9. The dispute began between the hours of nine and ten in the morning, and continued till between six and seven in the evening in the presence of the above mentioned gentlemen and a large concourse of people.

Before the debate commenced Mr. Chandler delivered the following "Prologue."

"MY FRIENDS,

"IT is not out of pride or vanity that I now appear in this place upon this occasion. Most of you know, and I suppose many of you have heard, that in the course of my lecture here, I have been discoursing of the principles of religion: and having explained the Creed and the Lord's prayer, did undertake to treat the doctrines of the sacraments, particularly that of Baptism. Those that then heard know, that I spake with a great deal of modesty, calling those who deny Infant baptism by no harder name than mistaken brethren; when I was unavoidably engaged in this disputation by a bold and confident challenge given me, which I knew not how to refuse, unless I would betray that truth which I believe to be the truth of the gospel. They themselves not being able to answer the arguments I then used, have cried out, Men of Israel come and help; and therefore have sent for this gentleman from London. Now I desire that all things may be managed with the greatest fairness and calmness, that we may debate of these matters as Christians, that nothing may be done which is tumultuous or disorderly. And as we have the favour of the government both civil and military, so that we may give them no occasion to repent of giving this liberty. And I hope that we shall all of us be willing to submit to

Newspaper Account.

the truth as it is revealed in the gospel, and lay ourselves open to conviction. I have no more to add, but desire all of you to join with me in this one request, *That God would grant that truth may prevail.*"*

We should have been pleased could we have said that there was nothing tumultuous or disorderly in the course of the debate, but it appears to us from the accounts which were published by both the parties that there were both, and that there was but very little fairness and calmness manifested. We shall not undertake to decide on which side the victory lay. The Presbyterians however claimed it, by an advertisement which appeared in a public newspaper, called the *Post-man*, February 25, 1698—9. This was as follows.

"Portsmouth, February 23. Yesterday the dispute between the Presbyterians and Anabaptists was held in the Presbyterian-meeting house. It began at ten of the clock in the morning, and continued till six in the afternoon, without any intermission.

"The theme of the dispute was the subjects of baptism, and the manner in which it is to be performed. Russel and Williams were the opponents for the Anabaptists, and Mr. Chandler and Mr. Leigh defendants for the Presbyterians. Mr. Sharpe moderator for the former, and Mr. Robinson for the latter.

"Mr. Russel opposed Infant baptism with all the subtilty and sophistry of the schools; and it was answered with good reason and learning. Upon the whole it was the opinion of all the judicious auditory, the Presbyterians sufficiently defended their doctrines, and also worsted their adversaries, when they came to assume the place of opponents."†

* Dr. Russel's Impartial Statement. † Dedication.

Causes of the Disputation.

It afterwards appeared that this was sent by Colonel John Gibson the Lieutenant Governor, who gave Mr. Chandler liberty to publish a certificate signed by his own hand June 9, 1699. In this he declares "I say, the above advertisement was inserted, as above, by my direction. I do also own, I was then, and am still of the same opinion as mentioned in the above said advertisement.*" On this statement we merely remark, that giving the Lieutenant Governor all credit for having published *his own opinion* upon the subject, it did not necessarily follow that *all the judicious auditory were of the same opinion.*

But the Presbyterians did not stop here, but says Dr. Russel, "We being silent, and not using the same methods as they did to squirt out foolish advertisements in common newspapers, these men grew confident; and upon the first of April following, in the *Flying Post*, they published a long story full of untruths and silly squint-eyed reflections, not becoming their learning or profession: and all to support a sinking interest. But it appeared so manifestly partial, that there seemed to be but little credit given to it, except by a few of their own party."

Dr. Russel complains exceedingly of the unkind and illiberal treatment which he met with from the Pœdobaptists; which we conclude all impartial persons would admit was not without cause, if they could see what Mr. Chandler published as *Some just reflections on Dr. Russel's pretended Narrative.*

The circumstances which led to this debate are related by both parties. From those accounts it appears that Mr. Bowes, a minister of the General Baptist church in St. Thomas's street, Portsmouth, and Mr. John Webber, pastor

* Mr. Chandler's Account, p. 63.

Its Consequences.

of a Particular Baptist church at Gosport, had publicly opposed Mr. Chandler while he was endeavouring to answer the objections of the Baptists. When a public debate was agreed on, Mr. Bowes proposed Mr. Matthew Caffin on the side of the Baptists; but Mr. Webber objected to this on account of Mr. Caffin's errors respecting the person of Christ: they both agreed in the choice of Dr. Russel.

The consequences of this disputation proved how vain it was to attempt settling such a difference in sentiment in such a way. We are happy to add that this was the last public debate on the subject of baptism in this kingdom: and also, while we deplore the strifes which it produced among brethren, that it was the occasion of several persons being fully convinced of the propriety of the Baptists' sentiments, and did in a few days after submit *themselves to be dipped in water*.* Thus the prayer in which Mr. Chandler wished the people to join him, "That God would grant that truth may prevail," was answered, in a way which, it is likely neither himself or his friends expected.

* Mr. Chandler's Account, p. 1, 2.

to Cambridge.

of a Particular Baptist Church at Gosport, had publicly opposed Mr. Chandler while he was endeavouring to answer the objections of the Baptists. Mr. Chandler's public debate was agreed on, Mr. Chandler being on the one side and Mr. Chandler on the other. Mr. Chandler's account of Mr. Chandler's errors respecting the person of Christ: they both agreed that Mr. Chandler was in the wrong.

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MONACENSIS.

The consequences of this dispute proved how vain it was to attempt settling such a difference in sentiment in such a way. We are happy to add that this was the last public debate on the subject of baptism in this kingdom: and alas, while we deplore the animosity which it produced among the-
them, that it was the occasion of several persons being fully convinced of the propriety of the Baptist's sentiments, and did in a few days after submit themselves to be dipped in water. Thus the prayer in which Mr. Chandler wished the people to join him, "That God would grant that truth may prevail," was answered, in a way which, it is likely neither himself or his friends expected.

Mr. Chandler's account of the debate is given in the following manner:—

On the 17th of May, 1755, a public debate was held at the Baptist Church in Gosport, between Mr. Chandler and Mr. Chandler.

The subject of the debate was, "Whether baptism is necessary to salvation." Mr. Chandler was for the affirmative, and Mr. Chandler for the negative.

The debate was attended by a large number of persons, and was conducted with great order and moderation.

Mr. Chandler's account of the debate is given in the following manner:—

On the 17th of May, 1755, a public debate was held at the Baptist Church in Gosport, between Mr. Chandler and Mr. Chandler.

NOTES.

NOTE (A) p. 11. *Barnabas* says, "They are blessed, who fixing their hope on the cross, have gone down *into the water* full of sins and defilement, and come up *out of it*, bringing forth fruit, having in our hearts the fear and hope which is in Jesus."

Hermas, in his "Vision of the building the church triumphant represented by a tower," has these words concerning the explication that was made to him: "What are the rest of the stones which fell by the water side, and could not be rolled into the water? They are such as have heard the word, and were willing to be baptized in the name of the Lord; but when they call to mind what holiness is required in those who profess the truth, withdraw themselves, and again walk according to their own wicked inclinations."—And in another place: "Before a man receives the name of the Son of God, he is ordained to death; but when he receives that seal, he is freed from death, and delivered unto life: now that seal is water, *into which men descend* under an obligation to death, but *ascend out of it*, being appointed to life."—*Stennet's Answer to Russen*, p. 143.

NOTE (B) p. 16. *Bishop Jewel*, in his "Defence of the Apology of the Church of England," in reply to Harding, who had upbraided the reformation by asking, "What became of the hundred thousand *Boors* of Germany consumed by the sword of the nobility for that their sedition and rebellion?" answers him thus: "The *Boors* of Germany, of whom you speak, for the *greatest part*, were adversaries unto Luther, and understood no part of the gospel; but conspired together, as they said, against the cruelty and oppression of their lords. It is true, Munzer was a busy man in Thuringia, and stirred up the people disposed to tumults by reason of oppression." To this we add, the sentiments of *Brandt*, at the conclusion of his account of the confusions and disorders at Munster: "However, says he, *in* he apprehending and condemning the people of this sect, there was little

notice taken whether those whom they put to death, were in any wise guilty of the above mentioned riots and mutinies; but the severity of the government was extended against all of them, without making any distinction hardly between the most simple and innocent, and the most criminal." He then mentions several instances; one of which will be sufficient to prove that this rebellion was not by the Baptists on account of religion. "The History of the Anabaptist Martyrs, relates, that they beheaded at Amsterdam one Peter, a sexton of Sardam, as guilty of the late insurrection, though he, being a teacher among the better sort of Anabaptists, had used his utmost endeavours to hinder it."—*Hist. of Reformation*. v. i. b. 2. p. 69.

NOTE (C) p. 23. The history of this affair is thus related by Robinson in his "History of Baptism:" "One of this sort of humble bishops, named Fidus, in the year two hundred and fifty seven, wrote to Cyprian of Carthage to know whether children might be baptized before they were eight days old, for by his bible he could not tell; nor could Cyprian tell without consulting a council, which was about to be assembled on very important affairs." The history of the Carthaginians will illustrate this matter.—"There was a ferocity in the manners of the old Carthaginians, and their history is full of examples of the cruel insensibility with which they shed the blood of citizens as well as foreigners."

"This ferocity they carried into their religion. When Agathocles was upon the point of besieging Carthage, the inhabitants imputed their misfortune to the anger of Saturn, because instead of children of the first quality, which they used to sacrifice to him, they had fraudulently substituted the children of slaves and strangers in their stead. To make amends for this pretended crime, they sacrificed two hundred children of the best families of Carthage to that god; besides which, more than three hundred citizens offered themselves voluntarily as victims. A brazen statue of Saturn was set up, his two arms brought almost together were extended downward over a fierce fire. The mothers kissed and decoyed their children into mirth lest the god should be offended with the ungracefulness of his worshippers. The priests were habited in scarlet, and the victims in a bright purple vest. The infants were laid upon the arms of the statute, and rolled into the fire, and a rough music drowned their shrieks, lest mothers should hear, and relent."

It is more than probable that Fidus proposed the baptism of infants, to save them from the arms of the burning Moloch. If this could be proved, his name ought to stand amongst the most renowned of the friends of humanity, though not of the lovers of scriptural divinity.

Note (D) p. 33. The learned Dr. *Whitby* says respecting this subject, on Rom. vi. 4, "And this immersion being religiously observed by all Christians for *thirteen centuries*, and approved by our church, and the change of it into sprinkling, even without any allowance from the Author of this institution, or any licence from any council of the church, being that which the Romanists still urged, to justify his refusal of the cup to the laity. It were to be wished, that this custom might be again of general use, and *as-persion* only permitted as of old, in case of the clinici, or in present danger of death." To this we add, what is said by Dr. *Wall* in his History of Infant Baptism: "All those countries in which the usurped power of the Pope is or has formerly been owned, have LEFT OFF dipping of children in the font; but all other countries in the world which have never regarded his authority, do still use it; and BASINS, except in case of necessity, were never used by Papists, or any other christians whatsoever, till by themselves:" viz. The assembly of Divines at Westminster, who in their Directory, say, "Baptism is to be administered not in private places, or privately, but in the place of public worship, and in the face of the congregation, and not in the places were fonts, in the time of Popery, were unfitly and superstitiously placed." "And so (says Dr. Wall) they reformed the FONT into a BASIN."

P. 11. chap. ix. p. 471, 472, 477.

Note (E) p. 119. It is remarkable that the formation of the first Baptist Church in America, exposed the founder to similar charges. This was Mr. Roger Williams, who, while he was Minister at Salem, was charged with "advancing principles tending to Anabaptism, and that he filled Salem therewith." It is thought, that could he have found a suitable administrator of the ordinance, he would have put his principles into practice sooner than he did; but after his banishment, being in a state of exile, it is probable that he concluded that his case was similar to the following proposed by *Zanchy*, when he is treating of baptism in his commentary on the 5th of Ephesians. He propounds a question of a Turk coming to the knowledge of Christ, and to faith in him, by reading the New Testament, and withal teaching his family and converting it and others, to the knowledge of Christ. But being in a country where he cannot easily come to Christian churches, *Whether he may baptize them, whom he hath converted to Christ, he himself being unbaptized?* *Zanchy* answers, "I doubt not of it but that he may, and withal provide, that he himself be baptized by one of those converted by him." The reason he gives is, "because he is a minister of the word extraordinarily stirred up by Christ. And as such, may, with the consent of that small church, appoint one of the communicants and be baptized by him." Mr. Williams being fully convinced that baptism

could only be properly administered, by a believer being immersed in water in the name of the sacred Trinity; one of the community named Mr. Holliman, who was some years afterwards a deputy from the town of Warwick to the general Court, was appointed to baptize Mr. Williams, after which, Mr. Williams baptized Mr. Holliman, and about ten others. This is said, by Govenor Winthrop, to have taken place in March 1639."

Backus's History of the American Baptists, vol. i. p. 105, 106.

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THE END.

Ivimey, Joseph

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